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MEMOIRS  
OF THE  
LIFE AND WRITINGS  
OF THE  
REV. A. M. TOPLADY, B.A.  
(BORN, 1740. DIED, 1778),

TO WHICH ARE APPENDED  
HIS DYING AVOWAL, LAST WILL AND  
TESTAMENT, AND COPIOUS EX-  
TRACTS FROM HIS DIARY;

TOGETHER WITH  
A CORRECT COMPENDIUM OF HIS PUB-  
LISHED WORKS, &c.,

BY  
W. WINTERS.



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# PREFACE.



THE invaluable Works of that

“Ever-living man of memory”

—AUGUSTUS MONTAGUE TOPLADY—have proved of inestimable value to thousands of souls now with God; and even down to the present day his controversial writings have about them a distinguished freshness and beauty, although upwards of a century has passed away since some of them were first submitted to the press.

The deep-felt sense of my obligations to his writings, together with the veneration I must ever bear to his memory, has incited me to issue the following brief memoir. His heaven-born spirit dwelt in a sickly, infirm tabernacle, from which he retired after thirty-eight years’ residence, and, according to the belief of his publisher, (Mr W. Row,) he died with the Gospel standard in his hand.

My warmest thanks are due especially to the Rev. J. E. Jackson, M.A., Hon. Canon of Bristol; and to the Rev. B. S. Ffinch, M.A., Rector of St. Paul’s, Deptford, for the willing and valuable help rendered in compiling the present volume.

It is hoped that the adapted snatch from the works of England’s greatest bard will be verified in the little production now introduced to the public:—

“ . . . . . It is twice blessed;  
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.”

W. WINTERS.

*Churchyard, Waltham Abbey,  
June 1st, 1872.*



Memoir of the Life and Writings  
OF THE  
Rev. Augustus Montague Toplady, B.A.

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TOPLADY'S BIRTHPLACE.

**T**HE name and fame of many a remote town in this highly-favoured isle, has frequently been perpetuated more by the simple fact of its having been the birthplace of some notable character, than by all the achievements of war and industry ever exhibited therein. Such we may say, in a degree, of the neat little town of Farnham, in the county of Surrey, where the illustrious and immortal subject of this memoir drew his first breath ; and where, among his maternal relatives, he passed his infant days, upon a reminiscence of which in his after years he could doubtless say, with the writer :

“Strange power of home, with how strong-twisted arms  
And Gordian-twinèd knot dost thou enchain me !  
Never might fair Calisto's double charms,  
Nor powerful Circe's whisp'ring so detain me.”

A word or two *en passant* on the locality of the place may suffice. Farnham is a market town pleasantly situated on the borders of the River Wey, and on the road leading to Southampton and Portsmouth, 38 miles south-west from the metropolis. It has been described by modern writers as of considerable antiquity. The name originally appears to have been *Fernham*, from the ferns growing on the extensive heath which surrounded almost all sides of the town, reminding one of Bloomfield's couplet—

“But groves no further fenced the devious way;  
A wide-extended heath before him lay.”

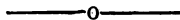
Ethelbald, king of the West Saxons, annexed it to the see of Winchester, and its castle in later years became the episcopal residence of its bishops. It stands on the brow of a considerable eminence on the northern side of the town. Thus we leave it, and consider in conjunction with our worthy the noble band of Reformers whose lives and labours were signally blest to mankind by the introduction of the Holy Scriptures into our mother tongue; the effect of which will never be forgotten while there is a true Christian in the church to appreciate it. Such was the “new light” of truth which shone with the splendour of a sunbeam in the high vocation of Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Beza, Zwinglius, Philpot, Foxe, Zanchius, Knox, and a host of others, down to the time of Laud, that it may be fairly said to have afterwards concentrated itself, as it

were, into one focus, in the ever-memorable author of the "Rock of Ages," who was set apart mainly to exhibit and defend the prominent features of Divine revelation. He was, in fine, a strenuous champion of Calvinistic theology—one of the Martin Luther type. Having inflexible enemies to withstand, he strove with them roughly. His nerves were like steel, his bow like iron; and the force of his pen has been compared to the weight of Hercules' club. However, like Calvin also, he was a polite scholar and a complete gentleman, and his feelings were fine and delicate. He pushed his adversaries with more intrepidity and vigour than was ever done by any preceding champion; his animated zeal and knowledge were justly proportioned to the cause he had espoused. The objections that have been reiterated against the doctrines of grace appear to have been collected and held up to his view with an air of triumph, and with the confidence of certain victory; but under the Divine guidance, and in the spirit of sincerity and truth, he was enabled to repel the attacks that were made against the bulwarks of Christianity in such a manner as to place him above any eulogium that can be passed upon his uncommon abilities. [See first edition of his collected works, 1794.] Southey tells us—though not without a sneer—that Toplady's admirers spoke of him as "the ever-memorable Toplady, who stands paramount in the plenitude of dignity above most of his contemporaries;" and further speaking of him in conjunction with Sir Richard and Rowland Hill and John Berridge, he says:—"Never were any writings more

thoroughly saturated with the essential acid of Calvinism than those of the Predestinarian champions." In fact, so great was the spleen exhibited by the author of the "Life of John Wesley,"\* that he did not hesitate in calling that gracious man of God, John Berridge, a "buffoon as well as a fanatic." However, more of this anon, in the outer and inner life of our worthy.

Mr. Ryle has justly remarked, that "few spiritual heroes of the last century have suffered more from the want of a good biographer than Mr. Toplady. Be the cause what it may, a real life of the man was never written."† It is not, however, attempted in this memoir to particularize the events of Mr. Toplady's earthly career in such a way as to meet the approbation of the mere literary critic; but it is hoped such truths will be presented as will, by the grace of God, be charitably received by every humble and sincere lover of the grand fundamentals of our eternal salvation. For, as Young declares—

"'Tis vain to seek in men for more than man."



## HIS BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

Augustus Montague Toplady was born at Farnham, on Tuesday, November the 4th, 1740, and his initiation into the Church, according to the rites of the

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\* *Vide* Bohn's Edition, p. 474.

† Ryle's *Christian Leaders of the Last Century*.

establishment, followed in due course, as the register of that parish Church specifies that he was "baptized" on the 29th day of the same month. He was the second son (the first son, named Francis, died in infancy) of Richard Toplady, a major in the army, who died at the siege of Carthage.<sup>\*</sup> His godfathers were Augustus Middleton and Adolphus Montague, Esqs., in honour of whom he bore the christian name of one and the surname of the other. Richard Toplady, the father of Augustus, was son to the Hon. Col. Toplady. He married Miss Catherine Bate, eldest daughter of the Rev. Dr. Bate, of Canterbury. The nuptial ceremony was performed by Mr. Julius Bate, the celebrated Hutchensonian rector of St. Paul's, Deptford, and brother to the bride. The writer is indebted to the Rev. B. S. Finch, M.A., the present rector of the above Church, for the following marriage certificate:—"1737, Dec. 31, Richard Toplady, Esq., bachelor, and Catherine Bate, spinster, both of this parish." Beyond this, little or nothing is known of the ancestors of Toplady. It is hardly possible to say whether he ~~was~~ related to the Toplady family of Nottingham (of considerable affluence in the 17th century), or to John Toplady, gent., Co. Derby. "The Earl of Scarsdale, by his deed bearing date ye 5th of

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<sup>\*</sup> This is a fortified city of South America, capital of a province, and situated on a sandy peninsula in a commodious bay. It was taken in 1544 by the French; also by Sir Francis Drake and again pillaged the third time by the French in 1697. Lastly, it was besieged by the English in 1741, when the unfortunate Mr Toplady fell in the contest.

Sept., 1673, conveyed to John Turner and John Toplady all that ye Rectory of Alfreton in ye Co. of Derby," etc. [See additional MSS. British Museum, 6705, f. 73, 89; 6707, f. 23.] There is, however, sufficient proof deducible from general inferences that the mother of Augustus was a prudent and gracious woman. She was early involved in the sorrows of widowhood, but in the midst of her grief she found everlasting consolation and a good hope through grace, from Him who is the judge of the widow and in whom the fatherless findeth mercy. She anxiously watched over her offspring with the deepest affection, and persevered in a plan for his education and future standing in life, which were the principal concerns of her maternal solicitude. The son regarded in due course her tender care with the utmost affection. Indeed, so great was the obligation which he always conceived he owed her, that he never mentioned her but in words expressive of sensibility and gratitude. The Christian character of his mother will be best seen in his diary bearing date "Thursday, 10th, 1767."

### HIS SCHOOL-DAYS.

It is much to be regretted that so little is known of the particulars of Toplady's early education. However, it is certain that he was sent when very young to the famous school of Westminster, which has found a place in Cowper's Table Talk :—



"But no prophetic fires to me belong ;  
I play with syllables, and sport in song.  
At Westminster, where little poets strive  
To set a distich upon six and five,  
Where Discipline helps op'ning buds of sense,  
And makes his Pupils proud with silver pence,  
I was a poet too," etc.\*

In this school Toplady speedily became a very apt scholar, lacking neither talent nor perseverance, but making most of what he possessed and enjoyed. It was clearly manifest from the first, that he possessed a vigorous intellect, and, by an uncommon application, he soon attained a degree of proficiency in the classics which raised him high above his fellows. He was frequently known to assist some of the idler scholars among the young nobility, who sought his superior service, and for which he is supposed to have received a pittance of three or four shillings weekly. His progress at Westminster was the more remarkable, because, when called to leave it, he could hardly be said to have passed the years of boyhood. Who his master was is not certain; it may have been Dr. Nicholls. The plans adopted by the master for laying the basework of Toplady's future career in life, cannot now be told. Among his contemporaries at Westminster who distinguished themselves in after years, were Churchill, Thornton, Lloyd, Colman, Cumberland, Impey, Hastings, Sir W. Russell, and the poet Cowper, who left in 1749.

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\* Ed. 1803, p. 19.

In the year 1755 Master Toplady, being then fifteen years of age, made his exit from Westminster School and accompanied his honoured mother to Ireland,\* with the view of settling some affairs respecting an estate which she possessed in that country; and where she afterwards resided for some considerable time. At this juncture of his youthful days (and even probably while at Westminster School) he devoted himself to the delights of the sacred muse. Amid his more severe exercises, he began at the age of fifteen to compose his "Poems on Sacred Subjects," to which he continued to apply himself until he was eighteen. They were collected and published under the above title at Dublin when he was in his nineteenth year. This volume of juvenile poems was allowed by competent judges to have been highly creditable to his genius; yet it has contributed nothing to his posthumous fame, and is now but little known or sought after. Still, however defective the superstructure may have been, its foundation was unquestionably good. It may be added that the sentiment, if not the harmony of numbers therein discoverable, is that which will save them from oblivion. But, as Cowper writes :—

"They best can judge a poet's worth,  
Who oft themselves have known  
The pangs of a poetic birth  
By labours of their own."

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\* In a letter to Dr. Gifford, dated from Broad Hembury, July 14th, 1773, Toplady refers to the circumstance of his being in Ireland "the first time," which agrees with the date *supra*.

## HIS PROGRESS AT COLLEGE.

The year 1755 was a period never to be forgotten by Toplady, for reasons which we shall notice presently. About this time he entered as a student in Trinity College, Dublin,\* at which seminary, consequent upon his previous preparations and studies, he was speedily fitted for receiving academical honours, and accordingly took his degree of Bachelor of Arts. Here he possessed every advantage for cultivating his genius, and improving his taste and talents. He prosecuted with singular industry and success those studies which were calculated to be most useful in after life. Mr Ryle says that "his early habits of study were kept up with unabated diligence. No man among the spiritual heroes of the last century seems to have read more than he did, or to have a more extensive knowledge of divinity. His bitterest adversaries in controversy could never deny that he was a scholar, and a ripe one."

## • HIS CONVERSION.

This extraordinary "son of the prophets" had good cause for thankfulness in looking back upon Ireland as the land of his spiritual nativity. His call by grace appears to have occurred when he was at the age of fifteen. In his letter to Ambrose Serle, Esq., he writes:—"The year 1755, in which I was first awakened

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\*Taylor's History of the University of Dublin, p. 403.

to feel my need of Christ.”\* The date here given is a year earlier than that which is recorded again by Toplady in another place. [See *infra*.] The Lord, who is not confined to ways nor means, directed young Toplady into a barn at a place called Codymain, in Ireland, where a layman† was preaching. The word of God was then immediately fixed upon his conscience “in demonstration of the Spirit and with power.” Let not such a display of sovereign power be rashly deemed the enthusiasm of a visionary or the *ignus fatuus* of religious distraction. There appears to have been nothing whatever peculiar in the place or instrument to work upon the fancy or passions; therefore to attempt to explain the effect by any logical or metaphysical investigation would be ridiculous in the extreme, while we have the Scriptures in congeniality with facts, to wit, that “it pleaseth God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.”

After the lapse of twelve years Toplady reflects upon the memorable circumstance in the following words:—“February 29th, 1768, at night after my return from Exeter, my desires were strongly drawn out and drawn up to God. I could indeed say that I groaned with groans of love, joy, and peace; but so it was, even with comfortable groans that cannot be uttered. That sweet text, Ephesians ii. 13, ‘Ye, who were sometimes afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ,’ was particularly delightful and refresh-

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\* Letter xxix., vol. vi., p. 207. Ed. 1794.

† Mr. James Morris.

ing to my soul ; and the more so as it reminded me of the days and months that are passed, even the day of my sensible espousal to the bridegroom of the elect. It was from this passage that Mr. Morris preached on the memorable evening of my effectual call, by the grace of God. Under the ministry of that dear messenger, and under that sermon, I was, I trust, brought nigh by the blood of Christ, in August, 1756." "Strange that I" (he continues) "who had so long sat under the means of grace in England, should be brought nigh to God in an obscure part of Ireland, amidst an handful of God's people met together in a barn and under the ministry of one who could hardly spell his name! Surely it was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous! The excellency of such power must be of God, and cannot be of man: the regenerating spirit breathes not only on whom, but likewise when, where, and as he listeth." Toplady's love to this good minister of Christ never abated. In a letter to him, Toplady says:—"It is now above eight years since I saw or heard from my ever dear Mr. Morris. The Lord knows, you are near my heart, and are often present to my thoughts. God grant that this letter may find my valued friend as well in body and as lively in soul as when I saw him last! I have been in orders between six and seven years, and now write to you from my living (Broad Hembury). The spirit of God has kept me steadfast in his glorious truths, and given me such joy and peace in believing," etc.

Having been thus truly regenerated by the quickening Spirit of God, and brought into a real experimental

knowledge of the gospel, the love of the truth as it is in Jesus became the governing passion of Toplady's new-born soul, and the only element in which his spirit ever really delighted to dwell. Before passing on one little instance may be cited of the keenness of his mind in detecting error when at the age of nineteen. "I remember" (says he) "in the year 1759, while I was a student at college, a gentleman said to me (with reference to this very doctrine which Mr T [oulmin] opposes), 'Would you, if you were God, create any being to misery?' My answer was, 'When I am God I will tell you.'" This was truly a grave retort. [See Toplady's letter to Dr. Gifford (April 6th, 1775) in which his thoughts are expressed concerning the Arminian cavil against personal election and reprobation, drawn from the relationship of God to men.]

### HIS TRANSLATION OF ZANCHIUS.

In the year 1760 young Toplady had but just passed out of his teens, when he finished his spirited, faithful, and elegant translation of "Zanchius's nervous Treatise on Absolute Predestination." The piece was well timed (says John Watkins, L.L.D.\*), for there was a zealous opposition made at that period against the doctrines of election, and extraordinary efforts were making to shake off subscription to the xxxix Articles

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\* Essay on Mr Toplady, p. 19.

of the Church in which that doctrine with its concomitants are expressly maintained and clearly expressed. It appears that the translation was not published until 1769. In a letter of Mr Toplady's "To the Rev. Mr. B. P. of New York" (dated from Broad Hembury, Sept. 6, 1773)\* he writes: "I am glad, for the truth's sake, to hear that my translation of Zanchius was so well received, and has been reprinted on your side of the Atlantic. God bless it there, as he has graciously vouchsafed to do to many in England. It was quite a juvenile exercise, accomplished, about a year and a half before I entered into orders, by way of filling up a few supernumerary hours. I remember shewing the manuscript, one day, to the late Dr. Gill, when he did me the favour of a visit. He advised me to publish it: but, to say the honest truth, I was then not sufficiently delivered from the fear of man: and it slumbered by me, from 1760 to 1769. I literally fulfilled Horace's direction (though from a motive not at all allied to that for which he recommends it)—*nonumque prematur in annum*. I can never sufficiently thank God for giving me to see the day when I can truly affirm, that I care not whom I displease when the inestimable truths of his gospel are at stake." Mr John Wesley† endeavoured to impose upon the public a few mutilated extracts from this translation of Zanchius, signed with the initials

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\* *Vide*, p. 362.

† Mr. Wesley "is so unfair in his quotations," says Mr. Hervey, "and so magisterial in his manner, that I find it no small difficulty to preserve the decency of the gentleman and the meekness of the Christian in my intended answer."

of Toplady's name, and printed on a sheet of paper that it might be distributed with the greater facility. This called forth a rejoinder from the pen of Toplady "To the Reverend Mr John Wesley, relative to his pretended abridgment of Zanchius."\* Shortly after this a second edition was published, and enlarged by a postscript to Mr Walter Sellon (one of Mr Wesley's colleagues), the sentiment of which was manly, spirited, and written in a concise and nervous style. The principles of this translation are the principles of the reformation; it was written with a view to obviate certain objections which had been heaped upon some eminent Christian men, who had then but recently left the Church of Rome. The principles are strictly Scriptural, and analogous with the whole Divine economy of salvation.

Some twelve years prior to the publication of the above pamphlet, or translation, by Toplady, which was about three years after his effectual call by grace, he began to be very much perplexed with doubts about the primary doctrines of grace, and for some time he was not a little embarrassed in his attempts to balance the evidence of the Calvinistic and Arminian creeds. With great eagerness he read a vast number of books on each side. Still, however, his perplexity remained, till at length he met with some sermons of Dr. Manton.

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\* Dr. Pringle says that Toplady "was so fully versed in this controversy (with Wesley), that he never seems more master of his subject, than when dissecting and confuting Arminianism. Many a sore drubbing poor Mr. Wesley and his adherents received from his able pen."



In a letter to Ambrose Serle, 1773, the gracious man states of himself:—I well remember, that in 1758, when I first began to discern some of the absurdities and impieties of Arminianism, my mind was in a similar state of fluctuation for many succeeding months. Dr. Manton's sermons on the xvii. of St. John were the means through which my Arminian prejudices received their primary shock: a blessing for which an eternity of praise will be but a poor mite of acknowledgement to that God whose spirit turned me from darkness to light. But it was a considerable time, and not until after much prayer, and much reading on each side of the argument, 'ere my judgment was absolutely fixed.—I shall, when in heaven, remember the year 1758 with gratitude and joy: as I doubtless shall the year 1755, in which I was first awakened to feel my need of Chrst."

A brief account of Toplady's experience at this early period of his life is thus recorded by Mr Ryle:—"It pleased God to deliver me from the Arminian snare before I was quite eighteen. Up to that period there was not (I confess it with abasement) a more haughty and violent free-willer within the compass of the four seas. One instance of my warm and ignorant zeal occurs now to my memory. About a year before Divine goodness gave me eyes to discern and a heart to embrace the truth, I was haranguing one day, in company, on the universality of grace and the power of free-agency. A good old gentleman, now with God, rose from his chair and coming to me, held me by one of my coat buttons, while he mildly said, 'My Dear

Sir, there are marks of spirituality in your conversation, though tinged with an unhappy mixture of pride and self-righteousness. You have been speaking largely in favour of free-will; but from arguments let us come to experience. Do let me ask you one question,—How was it with you when the Lord laid hold of you, when the Lord laid hold on you in effectual calling? Had you any hand in obtaining that grace? Nay, would you not have resisted and baffled it, if God's Spirit had left you alone in the hand of your own counsel?' I felt the conclusiveness of these simple but forcible interrogations more strongly than I was then willing to acknowledge. But, blessed be God, I have since been enabled to acknowledge the freeness of his grace, and to sing what I trust will be my everlasting song: *Not unto me, Lord, not unto me; but unto thy name give the glory.*"

Such extraordinary evidences of the inwrought operations of the Holy Ghost in the soul is sure to be followed either by deep experimental conflicts or great ministerial usefulness; sometimes both. The first of these three Toplady evidently endured, as is already shown in these pages; the second is manifest from what immediately follows; and the third will appear in due course, but will be best seen in his diary.

From the time of Toplady's fixedness in the truth (instrumentally through the sermons already named) he enjoyed much nearness to God, both in private and in public. He was frequently carried away in holy ejaculations of praise to God, which he has in such lively

characters handed down to posterity. There is also full proof of his mind being bent to the acquisition of solid learning and useful science. He appears to have had an eager desire, at an early period of his life, to serve God in the ministry of the Gospel; and he accordingly devoted himself chiefly to such studies as were best calculated to make him what he eventually was, "a scribe well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven." He took great care to furnish himself with an accurate knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages, that he might be the better able to study the inspired oracles in the originals, and to grapple with such antagonists as Dr. Priestly, John Wesley, and Mr. Oliver. He also read extensively the Greek and Latin fathers, as the slightest inspection of his works will show. He ultimately acquired a particular knowledge of the most learned productions on theology, both of ancient and modern times; and it was while laying up such a store of knowledge for the future that it pleased God in a very singular way to reveal his son Jesus Christ in him.\*

### HIS ORDINATION AND APPOINTMENTS.

At the commencement of Toplady's ministerial career, the entering into "holy orders" was by no means regarded by him as a light matter. He had well weighed the importance of the position and work.

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\* Let not the reader think for one moment that mental culture can supply any particle of the work of the Spirit either in conversion or in godly experience.

to which he was about to be appointed. He sincerely declares that he was moved by the Holy Ghost. He also asserted, what none who knew his character for integrity could doubt, that having subscribed to the articles, homilies, and liturgy, five separate times, he did so from principle; that he did not believe them because he subscribed them, but subscribed them because he believed them. He was well persuaded, that after such an awful declaration made by every candidate for holy orders, the man that can draw back, or palliate, for any sinister purpose, the doctrines he has subscribed, so as to insinuate himself into the favour of men, to avoid persecution, or for any aggrandisement, must be devoid of every right principle, and openly prove himself an apostate from the Church, a traitor to the cause he once avowed, and a liar to the Holy Ghost.\*

The Hon. Canon of Bristol, Rev. J. E. Jackson, has given in NOTES AND QUERIES,† the following very important notice of Toplady's ordination:—"Mr. Toplady was in Ireland, I believe, on family affairs shortly before his ordination; but that he was *not* ordained in Ireland I venture to assert upon the authority of the present registrar of the diocese of Bath and Wells, who, at my request, has kindly supplied me from the official records of that diocese with the information that 'Augustus Montague Toplady was ordained by the

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\* Ryle's *Christian Leaders*.

† 4th S. vi., 239.

Bishop of Bath and Wells ; ordained *deacon*, June 5th, 1762, and licensed on June 7th to the *curacy* of Blagdon, co. Somerset ; \* ordained *priest* June 16th, 1764.”

The living of Blagdon (says his biographer) was procured by friends in a manner very usual, but so scrupulous was he, when acquainted with the circumstance, that he was not easy until he had resigned it. Short as was the period of his labours at Blagdon, he had, before he left, collected, by the blessing of God, an overflowing congregation. An interesting anecdote is given by Toplady (in a letter “to Mr. L. C——”) of a conversation which passed between him and his bookseller, Mr Osborne, just before he entered into orders. It is as follows:—“I knew this Osborne ; and, by the way, a very respectable man he was. In the spring of 1762, a month or two before I took deacon’s orders, I was cheapening some books of him. After that business was over, he took me to the farthest end of his long shop, and, in a low voice, said thus : ‘Sir, you will soon be ordained. I suppose you have not laid in a very great stock of sermons. I can supply you with as many sets as you please. *All originals* : very excellent ones, and they will come for a trifle.’ My answer was—‘I certainly shall never be a customer to you in that way, for I am of opinion that the man who cannot or will

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\* Blagdon is situated on the northern side of Mendip, a short distance west of Burrington, and on the skirts of a beautifully rich valley, through which flows a branch of the river Yeo. It derives its original name of *Blachdone* from its elevated situation, exposed to the northern blast ; *Blac* and *Blac* being the Saxon for cold or bleak, and *Dun* for a down or hill. Rutter’s Delinea. of Somerset, p. 119.

not make his own sermons, is quite unfit to wear the gown. How could you think of my buying ready-made sermons? I would much sooner, if I must do one or the other, buy ready-made clothes.' His answer shocked me: 'Nay, young gentleman, do not be surprised at my offering you ready-made sermons; for, I assure you, I have sold ready-made sermons to many a bishop in my time.' My reply was—'Good Mr. Osborne, if you have any concern for the credit of the Church of England, never tell that news to anybody else from henceforward for ever.' "

"Oh name it not in Gath!—it cannot be,  
That grave and learned clerks should need such aid."

The year after he was in orders (1763), he asked Lord Chesterfield (with whom he was very intimate, as also with Dr. Johnson, whom the former called a *respectable Hottentot*,) for a scarf.\* "I am exceedingly sorry, Sir," replied he, 'that you did not mention it early enough. Had you asked me two days sooner, a scarf should have been at your service; but no longer ago than yesterday I gave away my only vacant one.' I answered, that I should be glad to hope for the honour of the next that fell. He replied—'The very next is already promised; but you shall certainly have the next after that.' You can discern, without my pointing it out, the flat self-contradiction of these two plausible speeches. I never asked him again; but looked upon him as a finished

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\* Such incidents are common enough in old romances; but a glove, a sleeve, a riband, or any other token from a fair hand, serves equally well to excite the enthusiastic valour of the wearer.—*Nares, Gloss.*

courtier from that day forward. When I was a boy he used to give me a guinea now and then; and generally prefaced his donation (which, to me, was then a capital sum) with some such proper advice as this: 'Now, do not buy too many apples, or nuts, or oranges, to make yourself sick.' He certainly had a great fund of good nature at bottom, though it was half smothered and corrupted by art and finess."

In 1764 and 1765 Mr. Toplady was curate, for about one year, of the parish of Farley-Hungerford (usually known as Farley Castle), about eight miles from Bath, and in the diocese of Bath and Wells. In the burial-register of that parish, at the foot of the page containing entries up to June 3, 1764, his name is written (evidently by the parish clerk) as "Augusta Mountague Toplady, Curate;" but his own signature, "Augustus Toplady, Curate," is attached to an entry of marriage in the marriage-register, Oct. 12, 1764, and again in the banns-book to a notice of banns, March 24, 1765. Towards the end of 1765 he disappears from Farley, the register being signed by another curate. This accounts for the first three years of Mr. Toplady's ministry, during which it is very improbable indeed that he could have been an *incumbent* of any living. (*See Notes and Queries*, Vol. 6, p. 239.) The Rev. Canon Jackson says moreover, "Mr. Toplady's autographs in the registers are perfectly well known to me; and I used often to hear aged clergymen in that neighbourhood speak of the author of the 'Rock of Ages' as having been curate of Farley for about a year." The following

is an original letter from Mr. Toplady to Dr. Baker, of Salisbury. It is dated New Way, Westminster, June 7th, 1770:—

*An Epistle to Dr. Baker, of Salisbury.\**

“It is high time that I should thank you, Dear Sir, for your many obliging Civilitys, & apologize for not having, sooner, presented you and Mrs. Baker with my Respects from Westmn. But a Person of your good sense & distinguish'd Politeness, will easily pardon an omission, caused by a perpetual series of Hurry, & a Multiplicity of necessary Avocations. Was you to see the room, from whence I have the Pleasure of writing to you; you would, to speak in homely plain English, imagine yourself in an Upholsterer's Shop. I am, at present, in the midst of a Babel; where confusion, not of Tongues, but of Goods, is the grand characteristic. I have been, for some time past, removing such furniture, as I mean to leave behind me, to an House of my own, in Town; and am packing up the Remainder, for Broad Hembury. It has pleased God to carry me through the trying scene which call'd me so suddenly from your agreeable Conversation with a degree of Ease and Firmness I could hardly have expected. But my old Enemy, sultry weather, which seems now to be setting in, obliges me to lye by from Business, now and then, for an Hour or two, and allow myself a few occasional Intervals of Reading and Chat.—I am more afraid of Summer, than of the anonymous Antagonists, who are continually pelting me with printed Squibs; ten Thousand of which would not singe a Hair of my Head, and whose very Printers are asham'd to let their Names be seen in the Title Page. I have been favour'd with a letter from Mr Philips. He desires, I find, that I wd send him my Answer to Wesley, & my other 2 Pamphlets publish'd before. As those of 'em, which I reserved for myself, are all distributed, except one of a sort for you; I

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\* This original letter is in the possession of the Rev. George Baker, M.A., of Freshford, near Bath (grandson to the Rev. Dr. Baker, *supra*), by whose kindness, in conjunction with the Rev. J. E. Jackson, Hon. Canon of Bristol, the writer is enabled to give verbatim this hitherto unpublished epistle.



shd be obliged to you, Sir, for acquainting him that Mr Gurney, my Bookseller, who lives in Holborn, facing Hatton Garden, is the only Person he can apply to: tho' if I mistake not, the letter to Dr. Nowell is not to be had; it having been some time out of print.—I will take the first opportunity of writing to Mr. Philips; and, in the mean while, he has my kind Comps. My Affectionate Respects wait on Mrs. Baker, and on Mr. Edwd. and his Lady. In Hope of soon having the Favor of a Line (directed to me at Gurney's, as above) I remain, with undissembled Attachment,

Rev'd. & Dear Sir, your obliged  
& very Obedt. Servant

A. TOPLADY."

"New Way Westm<sup>r</sup>

June 7 1770

The Rev'd. Dr. *Baker*, Sarem."

\*.\* "Black Seal. Quarterly 1 and 4. 5 Spears (3 and 2); 3 and 4. 3 dexter hands (No colours expressed). *Crest*: A demi-griffin rampant: holding a glove or gauntlet in his mouth." The seal is in good preservation.

It may be added, that the Rector of Farley-Hungerford, to whom Toplady was curate, was Dr. Henry Arnold, prebendary of Wells.\*

Returning again for a few moments to our author's translation of Jerome Zanchius, it is worthy of notice that the work was not only well patronized in England and America, but in Scotland it also found many admirers. It was republished at Perth in 1793, preceded by a short memoir of Toplady, and an excellent preface, by Dr. Pringle of that city. "Many volumes," says that writer, "have been written on the

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\* Obligingly communicated by the Rev. Canon Jackson, M.A., as before.

Arminian Controversy; but I have met with nothing that more completely, and in so concise a manner, cuts it up by the roots.”\*

### HIS LETTER ADDRESSED TO DR. NOWEL.

The famous expulsion of six young men from the University of Oxford† took place one year previous to the publication of Zanchius. This circumstance made the press teem with statements of various kinds. Among the rest, a pamphlet entitled *Pietas Oxoniensis* made its appearance; in an answer to which Dr. Nowel broadly asserted the Arminianism of the Church of England. This was too much for Toplady to bear, and though only twenty-nine years of age he immediately came forward with the reply bearing this title—“The Church of England vindicated from the charge of Arminianism, in a letter addressed to Dr. Nowel.” Toplady’s reply displayed a mass of information and learning seldom possessed by so young a mind, and abounded with arguments which remained unanswered, only because they were unanswerable.‡ The learning displayed in this elegant epistle is of the highest degree, even more so than that exhibited in his “Historic Proof,” because he had a more learned

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\* Toplady’s Works, Ed. 1825, vol. I., p. 104.

† For a humorous exposure of the sentence of the University, see M’Gowan’s “*Shaver*.”

‡ Works, Ed. 1825 (as before) p. 104.

antagonist to contend with; no less than the head of a College at Oxford. (See the work mentioned before in p. 16 *ante*, by J. Watkins, L.L.D.)

In the year 1767 Mr. Toplady frequently preached at Fen-Ottery (see his diary) as well as at Harpford, which lies about nine miles from Honiton, in the hundred of East Budleigh and in the deanery of Aylesbeare. Fen or Ven-Ottery was formerly a chapel to Harpford. This post he finally exchanged in 1768 for the rural parish of Broad-Hembury.

#### VICAR OF BROAD-HEMBURY.

In the year 1768, when the Nowel controversy was at its height, Toplady was inducted into the living of Broad-Hembury, near Honiton, Devonshire.\* He received his institution to this living on Wednesday, April 6, while staying at Exeter with a friend. In this comparatively sequestered situation his spiritual labours were abundantly rewarded, while his temporal reward was small. "His exactions, indeed," (says his biographer,) "were always beneath what the law entitled him to demand; and the clear produce of his living never amounted to eighty pounds a year." On money,

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\* Broad-Hembury, in the Hundred of Hayridge and in the deanery of Plymtree, lies between five and six miles from Collumpton, and about the same distance from Honiton. The dean and chapter are the patrons of the endowed Vicarage. Lyson, *Magna Brit. Devon*, vol. II., p. 266.

however, he set little value: nor did he ever seek after that preferment to which his talents and attainments might so well have encouraged him to aspire. "The correspondence which passed between Toplady and the late Bishop Keppel, of Exeter, and his lordship's Chaplain, now living, lies before me, and does high credit to all parties. Toplady, with the greatest frankness, laid open his case to the Bishop, and candidly informed him, that an occasional absence would not be adequate to his purpose, for that residence in an unhealthy situation would be certain death to him; and therefore if he removed, it must be totally. As Broad-Hembury is a vicarage, the Bishop could not, in his own judgment, give an absolute dispensation for non-residence; but from his great respect to Toplady he obligingly offered to renew his leave of absence from time to time. This did not appear satisfactory to our divine, who seemed quite hedged up in the scruples of conscience till the Archdeacon stepped in, as a mediatorial casuist, and combated his doubts with so much shrewdness, tenderness, and politeness, as brought him to acquiesce in the proposal offered, and in consequence of it he left the country for a time."\* It was while he held the living of Broad-Hembury that he composed most of his writings, which would have done credit to the highest dignitary of the establishment, and which, as a very competent judge has remarked, "will ever render service to the church, and do honour

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\* See Essay on his Life and Writings, by J. Watkins, L.L.D., 1832.

to his memory, while truth and learning shall be esteemed valuable among men."

Toplady's gifts and acquirements as a public minister of the Gospel of Christ, were clearly beyond the modicum of attainments of men of letters and quality in his day. Human learning was subservient in him to the knowledge of Christ crucified. His public labours were wonderfully sanctified of God even from the beginning, and had a steady, uniform direction, of which he never had occasion to be ashamed. In his office as a clergyman no man's conduct ever shone more brightly. He shunned not to *declare the whole counsel of God*; but preached the *unsearchable riches of Christ* with plainness of speech, earnestness of manner, and by a corresponding tenor of life. In fine, he distinguished himself as a judicious, evangelical, and eloquent preacher. His popularity and usefulness increased on his removal to Broad-Hembury, and continued till his removal to glory. It was not in an obscure country parish only, that his pulpit eloquence electrified (so to speak) his audience. So highly was he esteemed in the metropolis, that the churches, in which he preached there, could not contain the immense multitudes that crowded to hear him. Even on week-days, when he preached, he was always sure of a large audience. This greatly annoyed his enemies, some of whom, instead of endeavouring prudently to conceal their feelings of envy and rage, were guilty of the singular indiscretion of publicly inveighing against the man who had obtained that unbounded applause to

which they thought they were much better entitled themselves. This was the case in particular with Thomas Oliver, a preacher at the *Foundry, Moorfields*, a celebrated coadjutor of John Wesley. This most imprudent man, speaking of Toplady, and foolishly representing him as chargeable with Antinomianism, a doctrine which his soul abhorred, is reported to have said to his auditory:—"I went last Wednesday morning to a famous Antinomian church in the city, to hear one of the Antinomian clergymen. I expected to have seen a few people there; and though the church is large, the church was quite full. What a shame is it, my brethren, that an Antinomian preacher should have so many people to hear him, when I, who preach the pure gospel, was forced, but now, to wait a considerable time for my congregation, and after waiting long, to begin to eighteen or twenty people!"

Although Toplady united in a very great degree those various excellencies which make a captivating preacher, yet after all, not the manner but the matter formed the grand charm of his pulpit oratory. He who could digest the doctrines of such works as that of Zanchius when little more than a boy, must have been well prepared for teaching the most important Divine truths when he ripened into manhood. Of the style of his discourses the reader can judge for himself. Southey disliked him because he hated his doctrine; and although he characterizes his (Toplady's) intellect as having been quick and lively, and though he speaks of his manner of writing as coarse, he yet, with more

appearance of candour and truth, admits that "it was always vigorous, and sometimes fortunate."\* While preaching he frequently broke through the trammels in which he felt his ardent mind so uncomfortable, and began to preach *extempore*.

It is not very uncommon with many who associate with the great to overlook and despise those of the humbler class. This was not, however, the case with Toplady. There was nothing in his deportment which savoured of the spirit either of the haughty gentleman or the high-church bigot. He had frequent and friendly intercourse with many dissenters, such as Dr. Gifford, John Ryland, of Northampton (father of Dr. Ryland, of Bristol), and George Whitefield. He would often exclaim, with a truly catholic spirit, "Would to God, that the nasty party walls, which separate the Lord's people from each other below, were every one of them thrown down. Sure I am, that in heaven, all God's house will be laid into one. Ephraim shall then no more envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim." Perhaps no episcopal minister was ever more followed and admired by dissenters than was Toplady. The fame of his popularity spread throughout the empire, and even some of the strictest Scottish Presbyterians would call and give him a "promiscuous hearing." To such an one the imperishable language of Cowper may be applied:—

"I venerate the man whose heart is warm,  
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life

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\* Southey's Life of Wesley, Vol. II., p. 374.

Coincident, exhibit lucid proof  
That he is honest in the sacred cause.  
To such I render more than mere respect,  
Whose actions say that they respect themselves."

Toplady gives a very brief, yet excellent statement of the work he was called to do (see Letter xxvii. to Mr Pollard, Oct. 1st, 1773,) in the following words:—"My call from Providence seems to be, not the assailing of those who honestly separate from a church which (unhappily) they do not approve; but to expose treachery, and to obviate the interested sophistry of too many among us, who, for causes sufficiently notorious, pretend to revere the church, and actually live by her breasts, while they hate her doctrines in their hearts, and labour with all their might to stab her under the fifth rib." In a letter (xlix) to the Countess of Huntingdon, Dec. 9th, 1774, Toplady considers "The true ministers of God, as providentially divided into two bands, viz., the regulars and the irregulars. The former may be compared to sentinels who are to keep to their stations: or to watchmen, whose attention is immediately confined to their respective districts. The latter, like troops of light-horse, are to carry the arms of their sovereign, wherever an opening presents, or occasional exigence may require. Both these corps are useful in their distinct departments; and, in my opinion, should observe the same harmony with each other, as obtains among the stationary and planetary stars, which are fixed and erratic in the region above us. Hitherto I have considered myself as a regular: and have been



very cautious not to overstep that line, into which, I am persuaded, Providence has thrown me; and in which I can thankfully affirm, divine grace has been pleased to bless me. Ought I not to see the pillar of divine direction moving before me, very visibly and quite incontestibly, 'ere I venture to deviate into a more excursive path? I remember, that, in one of my last conversations with Mr. Whitefield, antecedent to his last voyage to America, that great and precious man of God said as follows: 'My good sir, why do not you come out? why do not you come out? You might be abundantly more useful were you to widen your sphere, and preach at large, instead of restraining your ministry to a few parish churches!' My answer was to this effect: that 'the same providence, which bids others roll at large, seems to have confined me to a particular orbit! And, I honestly own, I am still of the same mind. If there be for me a yet more excellent way, God, I trust, will reveal even this unto me. I hope I can truly say that I desire to follow his guidance with a single eye. As to the doctrines of special and discriminating grace, I have this much to observe: that, for the four first years after I was in orders, I dwelt chiefly on the general outlines of the gospel in the usual course of my public ministry. I preached of little else but justification by faith only in the righteousness and atonement of Christ; and of that personal holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. My reasons for thus narrowing the truths of God, were (with humiliation and repentance I desire to speak it,) these two: 1. I

thought these points were sufficient to convey as clear an idea as was absolutely necessary to salvation. And II. I was partly afraid to go any further. God himself (for none but he could do it) gradually freed me from that fear. And as he never at any time permitted me to deliver, or even insinuate, anything contradictory to his truths; so has he been graciously pleased, for between seven and eight years past, to open my mouth to make known the entire mystery of his gospel, as far as his spirit has enlightened me into it. The consequence of my first plan of operations was, that the generality of my hearers were pleased: but very few were converted. The result of my latter deliverance from worldly wisdom and from worldly fear (so far as the Lord has exempted me from those snares), is, that multitudes have been very angry: but the conversions which God has given me reason to hope he has wrought, have been at least three for one before. Thus I can testify, so far as I have been concerned, the usefulness of preaching predestination: or in other words, of tracing salvation and redemption to their first source."

Toplady's printed discourses are all full of excellent truths, which signally exhibit a thorough "knock-down, sledge-hammer style," which doubtless must have proved extremely effective with a well-instructed congregation. His style was nervous and masculine; his language easy and flowing without being florid or diffuse; and his arguments close, clear, and pertinent. In a word, he was to the opposers of truth a Boanerges, but to its friends a Barnabas. (See Mem. 1778).

“No account of English religion in the last century,” says Mr. Ryle, “could be thought complete which did not supply some information about this remarkable man. In some respects I am bold to say, not one of his contemporaries surpassed him, and hardly any equalled him. He was a man of rare grace and gifts, and one who left his mark very deeply on his own generation. For soundness in the faith, singleness of eye and devotedness of life, he deserves to be ranked with Whitefield, or Grimshaw, or Romain.”

Toplady was no servile imitator of anyone; but possessed pleasing originality of manner, had a great variety of talent, and would often use very strong and forcible arguments in preaching. His feelings were so intensely poignant as to move him, in some of his addresses, to a flow of tears; which, as it were, by sympathetic attraction, drew forth a reciprocal sensibility in his auditory. He despised those rhetorical tricks that captivate and allure the multitude, and yet so numerous sometimes were his assemblies (as before stated), that the churches in which he preached in the metropolis could not contain his hearers. He appears to march into the polemic fields as a “giant refreshed with new wine,” carrying with him a classical taste into subjects which have been too often treated in a dry, *jejune*, and insipid manner.

### HIS PUBLISHED DISCOURSES.

The union of strength with elegance and precision characterises his diction, and entitles him to a dis-

tinguished rank amongst theological writers. In 1770, April 29th, Toplady preached at St. Ann's Church, Blackfriars, an excellent discourse based upon the words of Paul to the Corinthians (2 Cor. iii., 12) "Seeing, then, that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech." This was entitled "*A Caveat against Un-sound Doctrine*," and published in Vol. III. of his collected works.\* This sermon displays the essential doctrines of revelation which have been stigmatized in all ages. The preacher places the Scripture as the grand object, and enforces the doctrines by arguments solid and incontrovertible. In the year following, three sermons were published, which were preached by Toplady at Broad-Hembury. The first, delivered on Dec. 25, 1770, was published in two parts, and entitled "Jesus seen of Angels" (1 John iv., 10,) in which he speaks in language the most sublime, as follows:—"I have already observed, that Christ continued alive on the cross for the space of six hours. During the last three, there was darkness over all the earth. The sun hid his beams. The dreadful transaction on mount Calvary

'Drove back his chariot. Midnight veil'd the world—  
A midnight nature shudder'd to behold.'

Why was the earth darkened? Not only to demonstrate

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\* One of Mr. Toplady's reviewers in speaking of his creed says, it "was Calvinism in the extreme; and when he reasoned on some of its distinguishing principles, particularly Predestination, he discovered no mean talent for disputation. He understood all the niceties of that article; and if his arguments could not convince, his subtleties would confound an Arminian." Dr. Chalmers, Biog. Dict.

the dignity of Him that bled, but, perhaps, to shadow forth that still more deep and Divine darkness which the soul of the Messiah was then experiencing under the awful withdrawals of His Father's countenance. When His Father's sensible presence returned, and Jesus with his dying breath declared his sufferings fulfilled, light revisited the earth, and the sufferer was received into glory. Joy was again in heaven (never to be absent more), when the human soul of Christ ascended from the cross. With what *eclats* of admiring transport was he seen of angels, when he rode on cherubs and did fly, and went up to his throne as on the wings of the wind!"

The other sermon preached and published is entitled "God's mindfulness of Man."

In these elegant sermons there is a novelty of sentiment in matters of the most common discussion; the beautiful pathos with which they abound, must excite at once the most cursory reader.

The publication of these discourses was succeeded by a pamphlet entitled, "Free Thoughts on the Projected Application to Parliament in the year 1771, for the Abolition of Ecclesiastical Subscription." Toplady acknowledges himself therein to be a defender of subscriptions to articles of faith, because the community have a right to demand it from those whom they invest with any office of a religious nature, as a fence for keeping principles inimical to their views from entering among them. At the same time he enters his

protest and looks upon it as a grievance, that it should be exacted from the laity.\*

In the year 1772 Toplady again appeared before the public vindicating the principles he patronised and avowed in his translation of Zanchius, in a publication under the title—"More Work for Mr. John Wesley; or, A Vindication of the Decrees and Providence of God, against a Paper called *The Consequence Proved*." In this tract, he canvasses the objections urged against God's prescience with that acuteness of penetration which carries a pleasing ingenuity into his explanation, in language which is worthy of great commendation. He was appointed to preach a visitation sermon before the clergy of the archdeaconry of Exeter, held at Collumpton on May 12th, 1772. This was shortly afterwards published under the title—"Clerical Subscription no Grievance."

Animated as was Toplady at all times for the interest of the established church, he particularly exemplified the same in the two octavo volumes which were published in 1774, inscribed—"Historic proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England." In the same year were published two sermons, the first of which was preached by Toplady at St. Ann's, Blackfriars, on May 25th, entitled—"Free-will and Merit fairly Examined; or, Men not their own Saviours." The second was preached in Lock Chapel, June 19th, en-

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\* By an Act, 19 Geo. III., the Dissenters are tolerated to worship God according to their consciences, on subscribing the Scriptures instead of the articles.

titled—"Good News from Heaven; or, the Gospel a Joyful Sound." The topics introduced in these discourses are treated with great judgment, accuracy, and caution, laying the axe at the root of Arminianism on the one side and libertinism on the other. Dr. Chalmers, in his meagre account of Toplady, states that he was "much more a man of the world than ever had been expected." The opinions of his admirers were in some measure different. It appeared, indeed, that he mixed very freely in all the habits of social intercourse with persons of all persuasions and denominations. The doctor culls this from a partial review of Toplady's posthumous works in the MONTHLY REVIEW, Vol. 70, p. 372. It is self-evident that he knew nothing of the inward life of Toplady, whose diary, had it been consulted, must have convinced Dr. Chalmers that such an assertion was without the slightest foundation. Moreover the doctor rests not here, but makes a further splenetic attack upon Toplady's moral as well as social deportment.

It may scarcely be deemed necessary to reiterate the doctor's assertion; but it is here given for the sake of the reader:—"We have seen a letter of his (Toplady's) in print, in which he not only enters on an elaborate defence of card playing, but speaks even with gentleness on the subject of theatrical and other public amusements. His admirers thought all this might be candid, or liberal, but they could not conceive it to be consistent with the spirit and tendency of his works, nor indeed discoverable in them."\*

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\* Biog. Dict., Vol. xxix., p. 464.

All pure-minded Christians who have read Toplady's life and works—notwithstanding the slander that has been uttered against him by his enemies—must conclude that he lived, as he died, without a stain upon his character, a holy and loving saint of God.

### HIS LETTER TO DR. PRIESTLEY.

Toplady's acquaintance with the celebrated Dr. Priestley arose principally out of controversy, the latter having written and published his "Disquisitions concerning Matter and Spirit," the substance of which Toplady calls "materialism, and atheistical in its tendency." It may not be out of place just to observe what his contemporaries, Dr. Priestley and Bishop Berkley, say of him:—"Bishop Berkley tells me, that I am all spirit, without a single particle of matter belonging to me. Dr. Priestley, on the other hand, contends that I am all body, untenanted and unanimated by any immaterial substance within. Put these two theories together and what will be the product? That my sum total, and that of every other man, amounts to just nothing at all. I have neither body nor soul—I have no sort of existence whatever. Here it may be alleged, that the two systems cannot be thrown together, as being totally incompatible. I answer: Why may not Bishop Berkley's word go as far as Dr. Priestley's; and the Doctor's as far as the Bishop's? Though, when all is done, the best way, in my opinion, is to cease from both, and to believe neither." The



Doctor met with a very tough opponent in the person of Toplady.\* His most intimate friends, with whom he corresponded very freely, were (besides those already mentioned in the past) Ambrose Serle, Esq., an able author; Richard Hill, Esq.; the Rev. Dr. Baker, of Salisbury (*ante*); Rev. J. Berridge, vicar of Everton; Mrs Macaulay, a great writer; the Rev. W. Romaine; the Rev. De Coetlogon; the Rev. Mr. Madan; the Countess of Huntingdon; Dr. Samuel Johnson; and many other eminent men of letters.

#### A SINGULAR ANECDOTE RELATED BY TOPLADY.

Toplady's familiarity with Dr. Johnson is worthy of notice. In Letter xxxvi. he speaks of the doctor thus—"I have some personal knowledge of him: and, however I *dissent from various of his principles*, nor can avoid smiling at some of his not unpleasing oddities, he still passes with me for one of the ablest and honestest men who now adorn the republic of letters." Toplady further states that—"My valuable friend, Mrs. Macauley, reminds me of the aforesaid Dr. Johnson, whose high principles, both political and ecclesiastical, are very different from those of the fair historian. A few years ago, Mrs. M. and the doctor (who never had a very cordial esteem for each other) met at the house of a third person, who had invited

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\* Letters l. and lxxv.

them to spend the day. Before dinner the conversation turned on the nature of civil government. Johnson, as usual, declared in very strong terms for monarchy; Mrs. M. for a republic. Some sparring passed on both sides; and Johnson happening to cite some passages of Scripture, which he thought spoke in favour of his own system, Mrs. M. undertook him on the scriptural score, and (as I was told, for I was not present) was rather more potent and pertinent in her quotations than he. Johnson, who does not easily digest contradiction, grew rather sour; and he well knows, that he acquits himself better in a political, an historic, or a philosophic war than in an holy one. The annunciation of dinner occasioned a truce to debate. But the doctor, with more ill manners than I ever heard authentically placed to his account, except in this instance, took occasion, when the company were all seated at table, to renew hostilities with his amiable antagonist. Mrs. M.'s footman was standing, according to custom, at the back of his lady's chair, when Johnson addressed him thus—*'Henry, what makes you stand? Sit down. Sit down. Take your place at table with the best of us. We are all Republicans, Henry. There is no distinction here. The rights of human nature are equal. Your mistress will not be angry at your asserting your privilege of peerage. We are all on a level. Do take your chair and sit down!'* This was very indelicate and rude. . . . Mrs. Macauley it seems coloured a little, and drew up her head, but made no answer. If I had been there, I should not have let the doctor off so easily for this savage

piece of spurious wit. It is true, his great parts are entitled to proper respect; but as Mrs. Macauley observed to me, when she was last in Devonshire, with reference to this very Doctor Johnson,—‘A learned man is not so miraculous a phenomenon in this kingdom, that he should expect to be honoured with divine worship.’ Though it must be owned, there are very few Johnsons in any kingdom or any age! It is, however, this great man’s foible to look for more homage and attention than everybody will give him. How little he brooks opposition may be inferred from the droll (but which might have been a very serious) adventure between him and Osborne, the Lincoln’s Inn bookseller. Osborne called upon him one morning soon after the publication of his Dictionary. The particulars of the conversation I have forgot; but in the course of it some reference was had to a passage in that work. The doctor was for consulting the particular place itself; and ascending a set of moveable steps, reaching down his Dictionary from one of the higher-most shelves. While Johnson was thus mounted and holding the Dictionary in his hands Osborne, who was standing beneath, happened to say some saucy thing that the doctor did not relish; on which, without further ceremony, he hurled the massy folio at the poor bookseller’s head, who fell to the floor with the blow, but soon recovered his feet again. ‘*An impertinent puppy* ;’ said Johnson to him, ‘I will teach you to behave with insolence to me; I will.’ But surely this was not acting very philosophically.”

Notwithstanding these and other similar traits peculiar to Johnson, he was a man of mind, and always commanded respect from his contemporaries; no one can doubt but that Toplady was partial to him simply because of his distinguished abilities.

### TOPLADY DINES WITH DR. JOHNSON AND OTHER LITERARY MEN.

We find on one occasion Toplady and Dr. Johnson in company with Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Langton, Mr. Claxton, Dr. Mayo, and Mr. Temple, at the house of Edward and Charles Dilby, booksellers in the Poultry, where they all took dinner. This was Friday, May 7th, 1773. "Hawkesworth's Compilation of the Voyages to the South Sea" was the first subject of discussion, but Toplady appears to have taken no part in it. Dr. Johnson seems to have been the principal speaker, as also on the subject which followed, *i.e.*, "Toleration." Here the doctor displayed his masterly powers in its defence; so much so that Toplady became excited, and spontaneously exclaimed, "Sir, you have untwisted this difficult subject with great dexterity." During this argument Goldsmith grew restless, from a wish to get in and *shine*. Finding himself excluded, he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for some time with it in his hand. . . . Once when he was beginning to speak, he found himself overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite

end of the table, and did not perceive Goldsmith's attempt. Thus disappointed of his wish to obtain the attention of the company, Goldsmith in a passion threw down his hat, looked angrily at Johnson, and exclaimed in a bitter tone, "*Take it.*" When Toplady was going to speak, Johnson uttered some sound which led Goldsmith to think that he was beginning again, and taking the words from Toplady; upon which he seized this opportunity of venting his own envy and spleen, under the pretext of supporting another person. "Sir," says he to Johnson, "the gentleman has heard you patiently for an hour; pray allow us now to hear him." Johnson (sternly:) "Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman, I was only giving him a signal of my attention. Sir, you are impertinent." Goldsmith made no reply, but continued in the company for some time. The next point in debate was the sale of Mr. Leland's *History of Ireland*, when something apparently favourable to Roman Catholics was intimated by Johnson—at least Toplady thought the suggestion was too liberal; so he put the following question to him:—"Does not their invocation of saints suppose omnipresence in the saints?" Johnson: "No, Sir; it supposes only pluri-presence; and when spirits are divested of matter, it seems probable that they should see with more extent than when in an embodied state. There is, therefore, no approach to an invasion of any of the Divine attributes in this invocation of saints." Toplady: "But I think it is will-worship and presumption. I see no command for it, and therefore think it is safer not to

practice it.”\* Thus, in concluding this brief interview with a genius like Johnson, we must say, that as a scholar and controversialist he stands out in the boldest relief, and—adopting the language of another—“he holds his gigantic proportions, undiminished by distance, and unimpaired by time, in the century that has elapsed since he attained his meridian altitude.”

### TOPLADY IS DESIRED TO BECOME EDITOR OF THE “GOSPEL MAGAZINE.”

In the spring of the year 1775 Toplady was urged by the Rev. De Coetlogon to assist in carrying on the “Gospel Magazine”—a work of considerable merit in the religious world at the time—which appeared in a new series the year before (*supra*), but he did not on that occasion accede to the request, for reasons which he thus states (see Letter xxxviii.):—“I find it so very inconvenient to have any concern with printing, at so remote a distance, that I shall probably in future publish no more, in any way whatever, than absolute occasion may require.” However, in the last month of the same year, he did undertake the editorship of this magazine, which enhanced the sale considerably. This office he held until July, 1777,† during which time he

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\* Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (Croker), pp. 260-263.

† His biographer states that he held the office until June, 1776, which is evidently wrong, according to Toplady's letter to his publisher, Mr. Valance, dated Dec. 1. 1777, in which he says, “I surrendered my editorship of the said magazine in *July last*.”

supplied a number of excellent letters on various topics, with the modest insignia—"Minimus," "Conoionator," and sometimes plain "A. T." Sometime after he had quitted the editorial chair, the proprietor of the magazine admitted other writers whose articles appeared with the same signature as that adopted by Toplady, namely, "Minimus." This grieved the ex-editor much, because the articles were not at all up to the mark. He wrote, therefore, to Mr. Valance, the publisher, in order to prevent any one in future from using the same cognomen. Toplady published in the same year a volume entitled, "The Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity Asserted." Here he exhibits himself as a philosopher, and a man of taste and judgment. He adopts the argument in favour of physical and moral necessity, and rescues the doctrine from the pretended charge of irrationality, brought against it by the self-taught opinionist. He combats the notion of man's determining power, and analyses the two component principles with much ingenuity, and with a palatable mixture of science and wit. He vindicates God's preterition of some of the fallen race as a Scriptural doctrine; at the same time giving it as his opinion from circumstances, that the far greater part of the human race was made for endless happiness. To this tract is subjoined a Dissertation concerning the sensible qualities of colour, illustrated from the celebrated work of Locke.\*

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\* Toplady was a strict adherent to the words of the Apostle in 2 Cor. v. 18—"All things are of God." This passage he considered

Although Luther, Calvin, and Toplady were considered strong in the doctrine of Predestination, yet they held it not a whit more firmly than Wickliff. Two propositions, extracted from the works of the latter, may suffice:—"The prayer of the reprobate prevaleth for no man." "All things that happen do come absolutely of necessity." This, and much more of a similar kind, found in his writings, prove that Wickliff was an "absolute necessitarian."

On December 13th, 1776, Toplady was appointed to preach at St. Mildred's Church, in the Poultry, it being a day set apart for a general fast. His text was from Phil. iv., 5, and the sermon was printed early in the ensuing year. In this sermon he unequivocally delivered his political sentiments, suitable to the clerical character, expressing a sincere attachment to the English constitution. He considered that the civil rights of mankind ranked next in value, dignity, and importance to the Gospel of Christ, and that the good Christian and the good Englishman were perfectly compatible, and that no book could be more unfavourable to the claims of arbitrary power than the Bible. The strife which was then rampant between Great Britain and America was doubtless the general topic of the day.\*

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was analagous to one of Alexander Pope's celebrated maxims, *ergo*, "Whatever is, is right," and which he believed was a "principle of the Bible, and of sound reason." Space forbids giving the whole of the paragraph. I would recommend my readers to Toplady's "Meditations" on this subject, p. 163.

\* In the same year (1776) Norfolk in Virginia was burnt by the British. New York was taken and Fort Washington with 2,000 prisoners. And the Americans were expelled from Canada. All the colonies from New England in the N., to Georgia in the S., which revolted from Great Britain, in 1775, asserted their independence the year following, which was conceded in 1783.



TOPLADY'S LATE HOURS OF STUDY AND  
THOUGHTS ON MARRIAGE.

Toplady had a very capacious and soaring mind, enclosed in a very weak and delicate body; yet this by no means retarded his intense application to study. Writing to his very intimate friend, John Ryland, sen., of Northampton, he says—"We often regard the physician, and yet transgress his prescriptions. I am, however, reforming very fast in this particular; as a proof of which, I must tell you, that if I prolong my duties at any time until two or three in the morning I begin to think I am setting up too late. For the most part I rarely exceed twelve or one." Ardent study and frequent preaching often proved too much for his weak and delicate constitution, yet he confessed "that the hill of science, like that of virtue, is in some instances climbed with labour. But when we get a little way up, the lovely prospects which open to the eye make infinite amends for the steepness of the ascent." Such also was his esteem for dear old Ryland\* that he continues his letter thus—"Had the Northamptonshire living fallen to my lot, I should have been a very troublesome neighbour to you. Not a six-penny pamphlet would I have sent to the press, without previously soliciting your corrections and amendments." It is not surprising to find that a man of such studious habits as Toplady should prefer a life of single

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\* He was a quaint writer, and the author of a work of some merit entitled, "Directions to young Divinity Students," which was highly commended by Toplady.

blessedness, which was doubtless very congenial to his taste, although he frequently found much truth on this point in the words of the learned Lipsius, whose writings were familiar to him—"Whether you marry or live single, you will have something or other to molest you: nor does the whole course of man's present sublunary life afford him a single draught of joy, without a mixture of wormwood in the cup. This is the universal and immutable law: which to resist were no less vain than sinful and rebellious. . . . To conquer this, is to endure it."

Had Toplady's life been prolonged, he probably might have entered into connubial bliss. In a letter to "Mrs. B.,"\* Toplady makes the following remark—"You tell me, you have been amused at London, rather than shocked, by those vehement exertions of female zeal, which in peeresses are no less violations of law than of delicacy. I, too, was last Wednesday amused here in my own parish by a scene much humbler than that which your electioneering ladies exhibited: viz., by what is called, in this country, a 'Skimmington:':—a procession, which is very accurately described in *Hudibras*,† and not with more humour than the real sight conveys. A most uneasy pair, whose constant jarrings, and whose frequent skirmishes (in which however the heroine, not the hero, generally came off victorious) have long been the talk of the parish and a

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\* This was no doubt the wife of Dr. Baker, of Sarum.

† Butler's *Poems* (Bell's Ed.), vol. I., p. 224.

nuisance to their immediate neighbours, and were mimicked and ridiculed to the life in this rustic exhibition; but accompanied with much better and softer music than the squabbles of the original couple usually afford. I have just heard of your remark, and no remark was ever more just, that let me be where I will, I am sure to meet with instances of connubial infelicity. They really occur to me on every hand; just as 'the graces' bolt from every corner on the pursuers of the Lord Chesterfield's letters. And yet (you will smile if not triumph at such a declaration from me,) I am really and literally tired of being a bachelor, nor unwilling to try a certain hazardous experiment, though half afraid to venture. After giving such a voluntary and decisive proof of my sincerity, I cannot be suspected of duplicity," etc. Although this letter was written about four years prior to his exit out of this world, yet we do not find that his thoughts of matrimony ever ripened into deeds. His superior mind was too fully engaged on the sublime and the beautiful that pertain to God and godliness to afford himself time for courtship and marriage. Writing to his uncle, Francis Toplady, in 1775, he says—"I am wedded to those pursuits as a man stipulates to take his wife, viz., for better for worse, until death us do part. My thirst for knowledge is literally inextinguishable; and if I thus drink myself into a superior world I cannot help it: but must say as some report Aristotle to have said, when he threw himself into the sea (if it be true that he did so throw himself) *quod non capere possum, me capiet.*"

## TOPLADY SUFFERS FROM GOUT.

About this time he was suffering from gout—symptoms of which he had had for a year or more previous. In a letter to his uncle (*supra*) he capriciously writes—“My complaints have been crowned, or rather shod, with a short but smart touch of the gout. On this occasion I have been congratulated until I have lost all patience. Therefore I do by these presents enter an express *caveat* against your wishing me joy. I am glad, however, that I know at last what is the matter with me. . . . It is really one of the last disorders to which I should have suspected myself liable. If the strictest temperance could have saved me from the gout, I most certainly had been exempted: for I never knew what it was to be the reverse of sober, so much as once in my life.” The spiritual life of Toplady was certainly an enviable one, his constant intercourse with God made his face to shine like that of Moses when on the mount, and even Abraham could not have had a closer intimacy with the “Father of Lights” than the author of this hymn on the assurance of faith—

“My name from the palms of his hands,  
Eternity will not erase:  
Impress'd on his heart it remains,  
In marks of indelible grace.  
Yes, I to the end shall endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given,  
More happy but not more secure,  
The glorified spirits in heaven.”

The desire of his heart was constantly to rise into a nearer conformity to the image of Christ, both in His death and resurrection. He was frequently enabled to look as it were into the heart of God's everlasting love, and to catch a glimpse of the page in the Book of Life which recorded his "new name," inscribed in letters more lasting than gold. His readiness to die was always apparent. On one occasion when a dear friend of his, named Hollis, met with his death in a very sudden manner, he (Toplady) observed, "I would wish for the same indulgence, whenever my appointed change may come. It is, I think, the most desirable mode of departure when the person is in a state of grace. How happy to be surprised into heaven!" "For an angel of light," he says in another epistle, "is not more superior in knowledge, dignity, and bliss to an infant in the cradle, than the souls of the elect when death transmits them to the throne of God."

## TOPLADY VISITS THE LONDON CHURCHES.

As Toplady continued to suffer from ill-health at this time, a change of air was considered necessary, he therefore removed to London (see his letter to Dr. Baker, *ante*). But even while staying there, in order to recruit his strength, he continued to preach a number of sermons in the London churches, principally for charitable institutions. Many christian friends gathered round him, being knit to him by the cords of love and truth, some of whom solicited the trustees of the French

Calvinist Reformed Church, in Orange Street, Leicester Fields, to allow him to preach to them on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. This was readily agreed to, and Toplady accordingly delivered his first lecture there on Sunday, April 11th, 1776, from Isaiah xlv. 22. It was on that spot where he closed his ministerial labours. It is stated that he continued there for the term of two years and three months, and that in his addresses from the pulpit in that chapel he often appeared, as it were, divested of the body, and to be in the participation of the happiness that appertains to the invisible state. In the same year (1776) during his residence in Orange Street, he published a collection of Psalms and Hymns. In the preface the compiler makes the following remarks, viz., "God is the God of truth, of holiness, and of elegance. Whoever therefore has the honour to compose or to compile anything that may constitute a part of His worship, should keep those three particulars constantly in view. . . . With regard to the following collection, I can only say that (excepting the very few hymns of my own which I have been prevailed with to insert), it ought to be the best that has yet appeared, considering the great number of volumes (no fewer than between forty and fifty) which have more or less contributed to this compilation. But remember, reader, 'none can' truly and savingly '*learn the song of the Lamb*' who are not '*redeemed from the earth*' by His most precious blood.

As from the lute soft music flows,  
Obedient to the skilful hand,

So tun'd by THEE my spirit owes  
Her harmony to thy command.  
Touch'd by the finger of Thy love  
Sweet melody of praise I bring,  
Join the enraptured choirs above,  
And feel the bliss that makes them sing."

This selection of Psalms and Hymns, containing in all 419 pieces, was published by E. and C. Dilly, 1776.

A spurious edition has since been printed, but so altered that it bears no resemblance to the original, which is replete with the richest odours of gospel truth.

#### TOPLADY AS A HYMN-WRITER.

In this delightful work he excelled all his contemporaries; and his name now stands prominent in the great category of ancient and modern hymnologists. The Rev. J. C. Ryle\* has given the following encomium (in his work *infra*) referable to Toplady:—"I give it as my decided opinion that he was one of the best hymn-writers in the English language. I am quite aware that this may seem extravagant praise, but I speak deliberately. I hold that there are no hymns better than his. Good hymns are an immense blessing to the Church of Christ. I believe the last day alone will show the world the real amount of good they have done. They suit all, both rich and poor. There is an elevating, stirring, soothing, spiritualising effect about a thoroughly good hymn, which nothing else can pro-

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\* Christian Leaders of the Last Century.

duce. It sticks in men's memories when texts are forgotten." One is reminded here of the quaint couplet of old George Herbert—

"A verse may find him who a sermon flies,  
And turn delight into a sacrifice."

And again:—"The writers of good hymns, in like manner, are those who leave the deepest marks on the face of the Church. Thousands of Christians rejoice in the '*Te Deum*,' and 'Just as I am,' who neither prize the thirty-nine articles, know anything about the first four councils, nor understand the Athanasian Creed. But really good hymns are exceedingly rare. There are few men in any age who can write them. You may name hundreds of first-rate preachers for one first-rate writer of hymns. Hundreds of so-called hymns fill up our collections of congregational psalmody which are really not hymns at all. They are very sound, very scriptural, very proper, very correct, very tolerably rhymed; but they are not real, living, genuine hymns. There is no life about them. At best they are tame, pointless, weak, and 'milk-and-watery.' In many cases, if written out straight, without respect of lines, they would make excellent prose. But *poetry* they are not. It may be a startling assertion to some ears to say that there are not more than two hundred first-rate hymns in the English language; but startling as it may seem, I believe it is true.

"Of all English hymn-writers, none, perhaps, have succeeded so thoroughly in combining truth, poetry, life, warmth, fire, depth, solemnity, and unction, as Top-



lady has. I pity the man who does not know, or knowing, does not admire, those glorious hymns of his, beginning, 'Rock of Ages cleft for me;' 'Holy Ghost! dispel our sadness;' 'A debtor to mercy alone;' 'Your harps, ye trembling saints;' 'Christ, whose glory fills the skies;' 'When languor and disease invade;' or, 'Deathless principle! arise.' The writer of these seven hymns alone has laid the Church under perpetual obligation to him. Heretics have been heard in absent moments whispering over "Rock of Ages," as if they clung to it when they had let slip all things beside. Great statesmen have been known to turn it into Latin as if to perpetuate its fame. The only matter of regret is, that the writer of such excellent hymns should have written so few."

In addition to the soul-refreshing hymns alluded to by Mr. Ryle, such hymns cannot be passed unnoticed from Toplady's pen as those commencing—"What tho' my frail eye-lids refuse;" "At anchor laid, remote from home;" "I saw, and lo! a countless throng;" "Happiness, thou lovely name;" "Encompass'd with clouds of distress;" "Compared with Christ in all beside," etc. Christians who read Toplady's hymns with a real felt sense of the need of their Divine application to the soul by the Holy Spirit, must almost imagine the writer of them to have been inspired. Such is the undying worth of the "Rock of Ages,"\*

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\* The Countess of Huntingdon had the original of this mellifluous piece of poetry, sent her by Toplady. The Lady Ann Erskine procured it from the Countess especially for the editor of the first edition.

that the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone deemed it expedient to translate it into Latin. The English version of this hymn, as given by Mr. Gladstone in his translation, differs slightly from the original. He gives "rent!" in the first line instead of "cleft," and "when" in the second line of the last verse instead of "while." The effect is not so pointed and sweet.\*

The Hon. Canon Jackson, M.A., has directed the attention of the writer to the Rev. F. Kilvert's "Remains in Verse and Prose," in which occurs (p. 88) a most beautiful Latin version of the "Rock of Ages," the first verse of which must not be omitted here—

*"Sæculorum pro me fissa  
Rupes, fac tegas commissaq :  
Lympha sanguine permista  
Plaga profluens ab ista,  
Dupla cordis sit medela,  
Culpæ lytrum et tutela."*

It is with great reluctance that the writer passes onward from so interesting a subject as these evangelical lays afford. There was a time when such hymns were forbidden in places of worship, and only psalms were used. Toplady mentioned something of the kind to the Countess of Huntingdon, viz. :—"We now no longer read of Watts's hymns being 'Watts's whims,' nor of the Holy Spirit being always present where the

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of Toplady's works. This beautiful hymn was one which his Royal Highness the Prince Consort frequently repeated during his dying moments.

\* See "Translations by Lord Lyttelton and the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone." London: Bernard Quaritch, 1861.

psalms are sung, and never being present where hymns are sung.”

### TOPLADY'S NARROW ESCAPE.

In the year 1776, Toplady visited Wales to take part in the anniversary services in connection with Lady Huntingdon's College,\* at which time he had a very narrow escape of his life, as he informs us in a letter to his friend Mr. Hussey:—"I have a still greater deliverance to acquaint you with; even such as I trust will never be blotted from my grateful remembrance. On the anniversary day in Wales, the congregation was so large that the chapel would not have contained a fourth part of the people, who were supposed to amount to three thousand. No fewer than one thousand three hundred horses were turned into one large field adjoining the College, beside what were stationed in the neighbouring village. The carriages also were unusually numerous. A scaffold was erected at one end of the College court, on which a book-stand was placed by way of a pulpit; and from thence six or seven of us preached successively to one of the most attentive and most lively congregations I ever beheld. When it came to my turn to preach, I advanced to the front, and had not gone more than half way through my prayer before sermon when the scaffold suddenly fell in. As I stood very near the highermost step (and the steps did not fall with the

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\* This College was originally established by Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, at Talgarth, Co. Brecon, S. Wales, in 1768. In 1791, it was removed by the Trustees to Cheshunt, and re-opened in the year following. It has since become incorporated with the University of London, and is empowered to grant certificates for degrees.

rest), Providence enabled me to keep on my feet through the assistance of Mr. Winkworth, who laid fast hold on my arm. About forty ministers were on the scaffold and steps when the former broke down. . . . Such was the wonderful goodness of the Lord to me that I was not in the least disconcerted on this dangerous occasion, which I mention to the grace of that Providence without which a much smaller incident would inevitably have shocked every nerve I have. About half-a-minute after this interruption had commenced I had the satisfaction to inform the people that no damage had ensued. . . . Prayer ended I was enabled to preach, and great grace seemed to be upon us all. . . . I had the happiness of seeing dear Lady Huntingdon (who is the most precious saint of God I ever knew) well, both in body and soul."

#### TOPLADY'S LETTER TO DR. DODD.

The following year Toplady wrote to Dr. William Dodd, a divine in the Church of England, equally noted for his abilities and his melancholy end. He was born in 1729, ordained in 1753, distinguished himself as a preacher, and was made one of the King's Chaplains in 1764. While in this office he desired the rectory of St. George's, Hanover Square, and sought to obtain it by fraudulent means, writing to the lady of Lord Chancellor Aspley, and offering her a sum of £3000 if she would secure for him the vacant parish church. This insulting proposal was traced to the aspirant himself, and the King immediately ordered his

name to be struck off from his list as chaplain. In 1777 Dr. Dodd forged the name of his former pupil, Lord Chesterfield, to a bond for £4,200. He was quickly discovered in this crime, and consequently cast into prison, tried, and convicted; and, notwithstanding the most strenuous efforts to save his life, he suffered the penalty of the then existing law, and was executed at Tyburn on June 27th of the same year. Three months prior to his execution Toplady addressed him, after some few preliminary remarks, as follows:—

“ . . . . I say, before you depart this world. For it is but too indubitable, that there is not a single ray of hope from any one quarter whatsoever of your avoiding the utmost effect of the terrible sentence which impends. Let me, therefore, importune you for God’s sake, and for your own, to devote the remainder of your time to more important employ than that of writing notes on Shakespeare. Indeed, and indeed, your situation is such as should confine your attention to objects of infinitely greater moment. The searcher of hearts knows that I thus plainly address you from motives of humanity, and from an anxious solicitude for your everlasting welfare. I am, with undissembled sympathy and respect, Sir, your well-wisher in time and eternity,

“AUGUSTUS TOPLADY.

“New-Street, March 17, 1777.”

At the commencement of the same year Toplady wrote the following letter of recommendation of Francis Quarles’ “*Emblems Divine and Moral*,” which was afterwards published:—

“Sir,—As you requested my opinion, relative to the expediency of re-publishing Quarles’s *Emblems*, and the *School of the Heart*, it is incumbent on me to acquaint you, that, as an humble individual I most sincerely vote for a new and correct edition of those excellent

books.—The former was of much spiritual use to me at an early period of my life: and I still consider it as a very ingenious and valuable treasury of Christian experience.—The latter I have laterly perused: and am strongly persuaded that the re-printing it may answer many advantageous purposes to the Church of Christ. Be particularly careful to give neat and beautiful impressions of the numerous and expressive cuts, which illustrate each respective article. I would advise you to keep strictly to the designs of the original plates, and not to vary from them in a single instance: but the execution of them, as they stand in the old editions, calls for improvement.—In emblematic works much depends on the elegance of the engravings, which if well finished, speak an ocular language, singularly emphatic and universally intelligible. The eye very frequently informs the understanding, and affects the heart, when the most labored efforts of vocal rhetoric fail.

*Segnius irritant animos domissa per arum,  
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ  
Ipse sibi tradit spectator.*

"With an earnest desire and hope that your intended undertaking will be owned and blest of God, to the establishment of his people in knowledge and to their growth in holiness and comfort, I remain, Sir, your sincere well wisher,

"AUGUSTUS MONTAGUE TOPLADY.

"New-Street, Jan. 3, 1777."

Notwithstanding the harsh aspersions that have been heaped upon Toplady by divines less orthodox, who have misjudged his charity simply because he could not go with them in justifying the works of the creature as meritorious in point of salvation, no one can disprove the fact, that as Toplady was frequently hot and zealous in opposing his enemies, he was still equally loving and amiable in the society of them that loved his Master and his doctrine; nor did he ever cease to pity those whose tenets he verily hated. This fact is

sweetly exhibited in his letter to Richard Hill:—"I am told, that Mr. Fletcher (of Madeley) has it in contemplation to make an attack on me, too. He is welcome. I am ready for him. Nor shall I, in that case altogether, imitate the amiable examples of yourself and your brother, unless Mr Fletcher should treat me with more decency than he has hitherto observed towards others." This work against Toplady appeared in 1776, and was entitled, "An answer to the Rev. Mr. Toplady's Vindication of the Decrees.—*By the Author of the Checks*"—(namely Rev. J. W. Fletcher, vicar of Madeley, Salop.) This answer evidently does not speak well for the vicar's Christian principles. The arguments used by Toplady proved too strong for his digestion. Any natural man would kick against the same things—to wit: "The elect shall be saved do what they will; the reprobate shall be damn'd, do what they can?" The Vindication of the Decrees bears this additional title—"More work for Mr. John Wesley, etc."

. . . . . What in me is dark,  
 Illumine! . . . . .  
 That, to the height of this great argument,  
 I may assert eternal providence,  
 And justify the ways of God to men.—*Milton.*

Mr. Hill so highly recommended this work on the Decrees, by Toplady, that it tended only to exasperate Mr. Fletcher the more, for the next year he published "A reply to the Principal Arguments by which the Calvinists and the Fatalists support the

doctrine of Absolute Necessity, being remarks on the Rev. Mr. Toplady's Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity." "Tenderness, it is very evident has no good effect on Mr. Wesley, and his pretended family of love. Witness the rancour with which Mr. Hervey's\* memory and works are treated by that lovely family. For my own part I shall never attempt to hew such millstones with a feather. They must be served as nettles: press them close, and they cannot sting.— Yet have they my prayers, and my best wishes for their present and future salvation. But not one hair's breadth of the gospel will I ever (God being my helper) offer up at their shrine, or sacrifice to their idol." He further writes (*vide* Toplady's epistle to Ambrose Serle, Esq.,) with undaunted energy—"Mr. Fletcher may fire off as soon as he pleases. The weapons of his warfare can never wound the truths of God any more than a handful of feathers can batter down my church tower. I shall, however, be glad to see his performance when it appears. Mr. Shirley told me when I was last at Bath, that Fletcher is to succeed Pope Wesley as commander-in-chief of the societies, if he should survive his holiness. No wonder therefore that the Cardinal of Madeley is such a zealous stickler for the cause. One would think that the Swiss† were universally fated to fight for pay."

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\* Author of "Meditations among the Tombs, and other Contemplations." Ob. 1758.

† John William de la Flechere (or Fletcher) was born at Nyon, in Switzerland, Sept. 12th, 1729. He was vicar of Madeley, in Shropshire, and died August 14, 1785.



Notwithstanding Toplady's expressed severity against Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher and others of that particular fraternity, he had a meek and humble spirit, as is very evident in his seventieth letter written from Knightsbridge not a great while before his death;—"Madam, your letter quite distresses me, because it places excellencies to my account which I feel myself to be totally unpossessed of. Among all the weak and unworthy servants of Christ, I am the unworthiest and the weakest. If you knew me as well as I know myself, you would be entirely of my mind. For the Lord's sake let us look to Jesus only, and learn to cease from man. Christ is all in all. Every other person and thing are vile, and wretched, and hateful, but so far as he deigns to smile and bless. 'Less than nothing and vanity, is the only *motto* that belongs to me. If he vouchsafe to wash me in his blood, and to save me by his infinitely free and glorious redemption, a more worthless and helpless sinner will never sing his praises in the land of glory. Instead of commending me, pray for me, that I may be kept from evil, and devote my few days (in humble and earnest attempts at least) to the honour of His name." Such a timely reproof as this goes far to show the real spiritual and internal character of Toplady.

#### TOPLADY'S APPROACHING DISSOLUTION.

In the memorials of the Clayton Family, edited by the Rev. T. W. Aveling, occurs a letter of Toplady's addressed to Mrs. Flower on the death of her husband.

This letter is of a very interesting character, showing the writer's christian sympathy with a sister in affliction. It is among the latest of his correspondence. From the latter end of the year 1775, Toplady's health began to show symptoms of decay, of which he was truly conscious, as appears from his letter to Dr. Baker of Sarum, dated from Knightsbridge, August 12th, 1777:—

“I have been at best in a most fluctuating state of health for a year and a half past; and several times was in a near view of landing on that coast where the inhabitant shall not say I am sick. At these times, I bless God that my cheerfulness never forsook me; and, which calls for still infinitely greater thankfulness, my sense of personal interest in his electing mercy and in the great salvation of Jesus was never darkened by a single cloud.”

Toplady continued at Knightsbridge for his health's sake until the middle of March, 1778, when he returned to his people at Broad Hembury, but he states that he could not “boast of any great effects produced by the journey and by the change of air.” He did not stay long in his parish at this time, though he had many dear Christian friends there whom he loved in the truth, for on the 30th or the 31st of the same month he sold off his furniture—as though he had some real apprehension of his speedy dissolution—and made for London again, where his ministry had gained him many friends. In a letter to his executor, Mr Hussey, he says:—“God only can tell how deeply my christian friends, and the dear people at Orange Street in particular, dwell upon my heart. . . . I have not room

to mention a quarter of the persons by name whom I love in the Lord: but all our names are written on his breast." How Toplady could at this time acquiesce in the sovereign dispensation of God towards him, note with what composure he writes—"My mind is quite at rest. All my affairs respecting this world and a better are completely settled. My salvation was provided for in the covenant of grace from all eternity, and sealed by the finished redemption of my adorable Saviour. This is not fancy or vague speculation, but the blest fruition of a full assurance of faith in God." The fact of his health being greatly on the decline became obvious to all who knew him. On Easter Sunday, April 19th, 1778, he attempted to preach from Isaiah xxvi. 19th,—“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.” His voice became so thick and hoarse that he was obliged, after naming the text, to descend from the pulpit; but so ardently abounding was he in the ministry of the word, that when the least abatement in his suffering gave him a little strength, he entered upon his work with alacrity of spirit, as if he were in a state of convalescence. After the above Sabbath he preached four times, his words on each occasion to the people being as if he should never see them again until he met them in heaven.

At this time, while almost in a dying state, he unexpectedly received a shaft from the quiver of his old antagonist, Mr. Wesley, who was then busy publishing abroad the greatest falsities relative to Toplady that

were ever conceived, to wit—that Toplady had receded from his former principles, and had a desire to protest against them in the presence of Wesley. His friends hearing of this, communicated to him from the country, mentioning with great surprise his recantation. The suggestion of such a report was certainly prematurely made, on the presumption that Toplady was in such a state that it would not be communicated to him, and if it should, that his tongue and pen would be so torpid as to render him unable to enter his protest against the flagitious turpitude of such a procedure. But when he came to a full knowledge of the subtle transactions of his enemies, new life as it were seemed to be infused into him spontaneously. The dying embers that remained were again rekindled into a flame. He at once acquainted his physician with his intention of going before his congregation again, and making a solemn appeal in reference to his past and present principles, so as to counteract the baneful effects of a party rage and misrepresentation, concealed under the robe of virtue or Christian purity. He was informed that it would be dangerous to him to make the attempt, and that probably he might die in the execution of it. He replied, with his usual magnanimity,—“A good man once said he would rather wear out than rust out: and I would rather die in the harness than die in the stall.”

#### TOPLADY'S DYING AVOVAL.

On Sunday, June the 14th, he came from Knightsbridge, and after a sermon by his assistant—the Rev.

Dr. Illingworth—he went up into the pulpit, to the inexpressible surprise of his people, and made a short but affecting exhortation, from the 2nd Epistle of Peter, ch. 1, v. 13, 14 :—“ Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.” When mentioning the sensible peace of which he was the recipient, and the joy and consolation of the Holy Ghost that he had participated in for some time past, and the desirable expectation that in a few days he must resign his mortal part to corruption, as a prelude to seeing the King in His beauty, the effect produced upon his auditory cannot be described. He closed his address—which was printed within a week after under the title of “*The Rev. Mr. Toplady’s Dying Avowal of his Religious Sentiments,*” with remarks respecting the purport of his coming there, the substance of which was as follows :—“ Whereas, some time since, a wicked, scandalous and false report was diffused in various parts of this kingdom by the followers of Mr. John Wesley, purporting that I have changed some of my religious sentiments, especially such as relate more immediately to the doctrines of grace, I thought it my indispensable duty, on the Sunday after I received this information, which was the 13th of June last, publicly to declare myself from the pulpit in Orange Street Chapel to the following effect :—‘ It having been industriously circulated by some malicious and unprincipled persons, that during my present long and severe illness I expressed a

strong desire of seeing Mr. John Wesley before I die, and revoking some particulars relative to him which occur in my writings. Now I do most publicly and solemnly aver that I have not, nor ever have had, any such intention or desire; and that I most sincerely hope my last hours will be much better employed than in conversing with such a man;’ to which I added—‘So certain and so satisfied am I, of the truth of all that I have ever written, that was I now sitting up in my dying bed with a pen and ink in my hand, and all the religious and controversial writings I ever published (more especially those relating to Mr John Wesley and the Arminian controversy), whether respecting facts or doctrines, could at once be displayed to my view, I should not strike out a single line relative to him or them.’ Matters rested thus, when I received a letter dated July 17th, 1778, from a friend who lives near an hundred miles from town, in which letter is the following passage:—‘I cannot help feeling an uncommon emotion and surprise at the report that you have recanted all that you have written and said against John Wesley, and many like things; and that you declared as much to your congregation a few weeks ago. I was told this by two persons, who said they were there present at the time. How am I amazed at such falsehoods! The party and name and character that are established by lies have no good foundation, and therefore can never stand long.’ That determined me to publish this address to the religious world. I pray God to give the perfect liars grace and repentance to the acknowledgment of the

truth; and may every blessing of the upper and of the nether springs be the portion of those who maintain, who experience, and adorn the glorious gospel of the grace of God. Should any hostile notice be taken of this paper, I do not intend to make any kind of reply. I am every day in view of dissolution; and, in the fullest assurance of my eternal salvation (an assurance which has not been clouded by a single doubt for near a year and an half last past), am waiting, looking, and longing for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I once intended subjoining to this paper the specific outlines of my religious sentiments; but on further reflection I believe it may be more expedient to refer the readers to the several writings I have published, every one of which I do hereby, as a dying man, ratify and declare to be expressive of my real religious principles,\* from any one of which principles I have never varied, in the least degree, since God enlightened me into the clear knowledge of his truth, which is now within a few weeks of twenty years ago. I was awakened in the month of August, 1755, but not, as has been falsely reported, under Mr. John Wesley, or any preacher connected with him. Though awakened in 1755, I was not led into a full and clear view of all the doctrines of grace till the year 1758, when, through the great goodness of God, my Arminian prejudices received an effectual shock in reading Dr. Manton's sermons on the

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\* If the reader wishes to see a doctrinal compendium of these, he will find it in a letter of Toplady's, entitled "A Caveat against Unsound Doctrine." See. vol. iii., pp. 18, 19, first edition.

xvii. of St. John. I shall remember the years 1755 and 1758 with gratitude and joy in the heaven of heavens to all eternity.—Augustus Montague Toplady, Knightsbridge, July 22nd, 1778.”

“Careless (myself a dying man)  
Of dying men’s esteem ;  
Happy if thou O God approve,  
Though all beside condemn.”

### TOPLADY’S LAST MOMENTS ON EARTH.

The dying hours of this truly excellent servant of the most high God were, indeed, grand and impressive above measure. The few favoured persons who were permitted to witness his last moments committed to writing much of what passed between them. While in conversation with a Christian gentleman not long before his dissolution, he frequently disclaimed, with abhorrence, the least dependence on his own righteousness as any cause of his justification before God, saying that he rejoiced only in the free, complete, and eternal salvation of God’s elect by Jesus Christ, through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. His friend’s account of the intercourse and conversation is as follows :—“A remarkable jealousy was apparent in his conduct, for fear of receiving any part of that honour which is due to Christ alone. He desired to be nothing, that Jesus might be all and in all. His feelings were so very tender on this subject, that I once undesignedly put him almost in an agony by remarking the great loss which the Church of



Christ would sustain by his death at this particular juncture. The utmost distress was immediately visible in his countenance, and he exclaimed to this purpose:—‘What, by my death? No! By my death? No! Jesus Christ is able, and will by proper instruments defend his own truth; and with regard to what little I have been enabled to do in this way, not unto me, but unto His own name, and that only, be the glory.’ Conversing on the subject of election, he said—‘God’s everlasting love to His chosen people—His eternal, particular, most free, and immutable choice of them in Christ Jesus—was without the least respect to any work or works of righteousness wrought, or to be wrought, or that ever should be wrought, in them or by them; for God’s election does not depend upon our sanctification, but our sanctification depends upon God’s election and appointment of us to everlasting life.’ At another time he was so affected with a sense of God’s everlasting love to his soul, that he could not refrain from bursting into tears. The more impaired was his bodily strength, the more vigorous, lively, and rejoicing his mind seemed to be. From the whole tenour of his conversation during our interviews, he appeared not merely placid and serene, but he evidently possessed the fullest assurance and the most triumphant faith. He repeatedly told me that he had not had the least shadow of a doubt respecting his eternal salvation for near two years past. It is no wonder, therefore, that he so earnestly longed to be dissolved and to be with Christ. His soul seemed to be constantly panting heavenward, and his desires increased

the nearer his dissolution approached. A short time before his death, at his request, I felt his pulse, and he desired to know what I thought of it. I told him that his heart and arteries evidently beat, almost every day, weaker and weaker. He replied immediately, with the sweetest smile upon his countenance, 'Why, that is a good sign that my death is fast approaching; and, blessed be God, I can add that my heart beats every day stronger and stronger for glory.' A few days preceding his dissolution I found him sitting up in his own chair, and scarcely able to move or speak. I addressed him very softly, and asked him if his consolations continued to abound as they had hitherto done. He quickly replied, 'O my dear Sir, it is impossible to describe how good God is to me. Since I have been sitting in this chair this afternoon—glory be to His name!—I have enjoyed such a season, such sweet communion with God, and such delightful manifestations of his presence with and love to my soul, that it is impossible for any word or language to express them. I have had peace and joy unutterable, and I fear not but that God's consolation and support will continue.' But he immediately recollected himself and added, 'What have I said? God may to be sure, as a Sovereign, hide his face and smiles from me. However, I believe He will not; and if He should, yet still will I trust in Him. I know I am safe and secure, for His love and covenant are everlasting.' To another friend, who in conversation with him upon the subject of his principles, had asked him whether any doubt remained upon his mind as to the truth of them,

he answered—‘Doubt, Sir, doubt? Pray use not that word when speaking of me. I cannot endure the term; at least while God continues to shine upon my soul in the gracious manner he does now. Not, added he, but that I am sensible that while in the body, if left of Him, I am capable through the power of temptation, of calling in question every truth of the gospel. But that is so far from being the case, that the comforts and manifestations of his love are so abundant as to render my state and condition the most desirable in the world. I would not exchange my condition with any one upon earth. And with respect to my principles; those blessed truths, which I have been enabled in my poor measure to maintain, appear to me more than ever most gloriously indubitable. My own existence is not, to my apprehension, a greater certainty.’ The same friend calling upon him a day or two before his death, he said, with hands clasped and eyes lifted up and starting with tears of the most evident joy—‘O, my dear Sir, I cannot tell you the comforts I feel in my soul; they are past expression. The consolations of God to such an unworthy wretch are so abundant, that he leaves me nothing to pray for but a continuance of them. I enjoy a heaven already in my soul. My prayers are all converted into praise. Nevertheless I do not forget that I am still in the body, and liable to all those distressing fears which are incident to human nature when under temptation and without any sensible divine support. But so long as the presence of God continues with me in the degree I now enjoy it, I cannot but think that such a

desponding frame is impossible.' All this he spake with an emphasis the most ardent that can be conceived. Speaking to another particular friend upon the subject of his 'Dying Avowal,' he expressed himself thus, 'My dear friend, those great and glorious truths, which the Lord in rich mercy has given me to believe, and which He has enabled me (though very feebly) to stand forth in the defence of, are not (as those, who believe not or oppose them, say) dry doctrines or mere speculative points. No. But, being brought into practical and heart-felt experience, they are the very joy and support of my soul; and the consolations flowing from them carry me far above the things of time and sense.' Soon afterwards he added, 'So far as I know my own heart I have no desire but to be entirely passive, to live, to die, to be, to do, to suffer, whatever is God's blessed will concerning me; being perfectly satisfied that, as He ever has so He ever will do that which is best concerning me, and that He deals out in number, weight, and measure, whatsoever will conduce most to His own glory and to the good of His people.' Another of his friends mentioning likewise the report that was spread abroad of his recanting his former principles, he said with some vehemence and emotion, 'I recant my former principles? God forbid that I should be so vile an apostate.' To which he presently added, with great apparent humility, 'And yet that apostate I should soon be, if I were left to myself.' To the same friend, conversing upon the subject of his sickness, he said: 'Sickness is no affliction; pain no curse; death itself no dis-

solution.' All his conversation, as he approached nearer and nearer to his decease, seemed more and more happy and heavenly. He frequently called himself the happiest man in the world. 'O! (says he) how this soul of mine longs to be gone! Like a bird imprisoned in a cage, it longs to take its flight. O that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away to the realms of bliss, and be at rest for ever! O that some guardian angel might be commissioned, for I long to be absent from this body, and to be with my Lord for ever.' Being asked by a friend if he always enjoyed such manifestations, he answered: 'I cannot say there are no intermissions; for if there were not, my consolations would be more and greater than I could possibly bear; but when they abate they leave such an abiding sense of God's goodness and of the certainty of my being fixed upon the eternal rock, Christ Jesus, that my soul is still filled with peace and joy.' At another time, and indeed for many days together, he cried out, 'O what a day of sunshine has this been to me! I have not words to express it. It is unutterable. O, my friends, how good is God! almost without interruption his presence has been with me.' And then repeating several passages of Scripture, he added: 'What a great thing it is to rejoice in death!' Speaking of Christ, he said: 'His love is unutterable!' He was happy in declaring, that the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, the thirty-third and the six following verses, were the joy and comfort of his soul. Upon that portion of Scripture he often descanted with great delight, and

would be frequently ejaculating, 'Lord Jesus! why tarriest Thou so long?' He sometimes said, 'I find, as the bottles of heaven empty they are filled again;' meaning, probably, the continual comforts of grace, which he abundantly enjoyed. When he drew near his end, he said—waking from a slumber: 'O what delights! Who can fathom the joys of the third heaven?' And a little before his departure, he was blessing and praising God for continuing to him his understanding in clearness; 'but (added he in a rapture) for what is most of all, his abiding presence, and the shining of His love upon my soul. The sky is clear; there is no cloud: Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!' Within the hour of his death he called his friends and his servant, and asked them if they could give him up? Upon their answering in the affirmative, since it pleased the Lord to be so gracious to him, he replied: 'O what a blessing it is you are made willing to give me up into the hands of my dear Redeemer, and to part with me: it will not be long before God takes me; for no mortal can live (bursting while he said it into tears of joy) after the glories which God has manifested to my soul.' Soon after this he closed his eyes, and found—as Milton finely expresses it—

. . . . . A death-like sleep—  
A gentle wafting to immortal life,

on Tuesday, August 11th, 1778, in the 38th year of his age."

. . . . . "Twere happy  
If I may find a lodging there at last  
Though my poore soul get thither upon crutches."—*Shirley*.\*

### TOPLADY'S FUNERAL, Etc.

The precious remains of this good man were brought from Knightsbridge on the Monday following his death, and interred in Tottenham Court Chapel, under the gallery, opposite the pulpit. A marble tablet bears the following inscription:—

“WITHIN THESE HALLOWED WALLS  
AND NEAR THIS SPOT  
ARE INTERRED  
THE MORTAL REMAINS  
OF THE REVD.  
AUGUSTUS MONTAGUE  
TOPLADY,  
VICAR OF BROAD HEMBURY,  
DEVON.  
BORN 4TH NOV., 1740,  
DIED 14TH AUGST., 1778.  
AGED 38 YEARS.  
HE WROTE  
‘ROCK OF AGES! CLEFT FOR ME,  
LET ME HIDE MYSELF IN THEE.’”

Although this gracious man requested that no funeral sermon should be preached on the occasion, but that he might

*“Steal from the world”*

into the tomb unnoticed and unregarded, and though

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\* See P. Fletcher's poems, vol. I. clx. (*Fuller's Worthies Lib. Grosart.*)

the time was kept as private as possible, there were notwithstanding several thousands of persons present at the solemnity. Foremost among the mourners in the ministry, was the well-known and eccentric Rowland Hill, who was then a young man. Before the burial service had commenced Hill could not refrain from transgressing one of his deceased friend's last requests. He accordingly delivered an excellent funeral oration in his best style of eloquence, which is said to have produced a very powerful impression on the minds of those to whom it was addressed. The funeral obsequies were read by Dr. Illingworth, and concluded with a suitable hymn. The body was buried in the family vault of Mr. Hussay, 13 feet deep (see appended Will of Toplady).

#### THE SLANDEROUS REPORT OF MR. WESLEY.

Shortly afterwards "Mr. Wesley publicly asserted that Toplady died blaspheming, and in the horror of despair. Such unparalleled virulence of conduct undoubtedly exposed the personal enmity that rankled in Mr. Wesley's breast towards Toplady." The gross libel was told by Mr. Wesley to Mr. Thomas Robinson, of Hilderthorpe, co. Yorkshire, and the Rev. Mr. Greaves, curate to Mr. Fletcher, of Madeley. In addition it was said, "that the dreadful manner in which he died caused a woman who attended him to join your (Wesley's) societies." Sir Richard Hill, a man



of excellent parts, stood forward, unsolicited, and detected the malignant conduct of Mr. Wesley on this occasion, and being then a living witness of the triumphant departure of Toplady, he addressed a letter to Mr. Wesley, which appeared in *The General Advertiser*, October 8th, 1779. The writer is not desirous of stirring up an old, and, it is hoped, forgotten sore, but he cannot forbear calling the reader's attention to a protest made against Mr. Wesley's splenetic attack upon Toplady, which was signed by the intimate friends of the latter. It runs as follows:—"We whose names are underwritten are willing to testify upon oath, if required, that all the particulars published to the world in the late memoirs relative to the illness and death of the late Rev. Augustus Montague Toplady are strictly true, we ourselves having been eye and ear witnesses of the same; and therefore we heartily join the author of the foregoing letters\* in calling upon Mr. John Wesley to produce his authority for what he told Mr Thomas Robinson, of Hilderthorpe, the Rev. Mr. Greaves, and others." Names of the witnesses—Andrew Gifford, D.D., of the British Museum, John Ryland, *sen.*, of Northampton, Thomas Evans, apothecary, who attended Mr. Toplady the whole of the time during his last illness, W. Abington, Thomas Hough, surgeon, W. Cowley, J. Cole, Thomas Jarvis, Thomas Burgess, W. Hussey, Susanna Hussey, Eliz. Sterling (who was the only nurse Mr. Toplady

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\* "By Sir Richard Hill and J. Gawkrödger," showing the palpable falsehoods spread abroad by Mr Wesley.

had up to the time of his death, and of course must be the person falsely charged by Mr. Wesley, to have joined his societies in consequence of her master's awful death, a charge equally false with all Mr. Wesley's other assertions"), and James Matthews. It would be an unpardonable omission not to refer the reader to the severe reprehension Mr. Wesley received for his slanderous report of Toplady by the Rev. John Macgowan, who thus expostulated with him:—"Mr. Wesley and his confederates, to whom this letter is addressed, did not only persecute the Rev. Mr. Toplady during his life, but even sprinkled his death-bed with abominable falsehoods. It was given out in most of Mr. Wesley's societies, both far and near, that the worthy man had recanted and disowned the doctrines of sovereign grace, which obliged him, though struggling with death, to appear in the pulpit, emaciated as he was, and openly avow the doctrines he had preached, as the sole support of his departing spirit. Wretched must that cause be which has need to be supported by such unmanly shifts, and seek for shelter under such disingenuous subterfuges. Oh! Mr. Wesley, answer for this conduct at the bar of the Supreme. Judge yourself and you shall not be judged. Dare you also to persuade your followers that Mr. Toplady actually died in despair! Fie upon sanctified slander! Fie! Fie!" \*

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\* This was printed and published in a tract entitled, "The Foundry Budget Opened" (1780). by the Rev. J. Macgowan, minister of Devonshire Square Chapel, London.

## TOPLADY'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

The last will and testament of Toplady is curious and interesting. It was ratified six months prior to his decease, and commences in the usual order :—"In the name of God. Amen. I, Augustus Montague Toplady, Clerk, Bachelor of Arts, and Vicar of the Parish Church of Broad Hembury, in the County of Devon, and diocese of Exeter, being mindful of my mortality, (though at present, in a competent state of bodily health and of perfect mind and memory,) do make and declare this last will and testament, (all written with my own hand and consisting of three folio pages), this twenty-eighth day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy eight, in manner and form following. That is to say, First: I most humbly commit my soul to the hands of Almighty God; whom I know, and have long experienced to be my ever gracious and infinitely merciful Father. Nor have I the least doubt of my election, justification, and eternal happiness, through the riches of his everlasting and unchangeable kindness to me in Christ Jesus his co-equal Son; my only, my assured, and my all-sufficient Saviour: washed in whose propitiatory blood, and clothed with whose imputed righteousness, I trust to stand perfect and sinless and complete, and do verily believe that I most certainly shall so stand, in the hour of death, and in the kingdom of heaven, and at the last judgment, and in the ultimate state of endless glory. Neither can I

write this my last will without rendering the deepest, the most solemn, and the most ardent thanks to the Trinity in Unity, for their eternal, unmerited, irreversible, and inexhaustible love to me a sinner. I bless God the Father for having written from everlasting my unworthy name in the Book of Life; even for appointing me to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ my Lord. I adore God the Son, for having vouchsafed to redeem me by his own most precious death; and for having obeyed the whole law for my justification. I admire and revere the gracious benignity of God the Holy Ghost, who converted me to the saving knowledge of Christ more than two and twenty years ago, and whose enlightening, supporting, comforting, and sanctifying agency is and (I doubt not) will be my strength and my song in the home of my earthly pilgrimage. Secondly: As to my body, I will and desire it may be interred in my chancel within the parish church of Broad Hembury, aforesaid, if I should be in Devonshire, or near to that county at the time of my death. But in case I die at or in the neighbourhood of London, or at any other considerable distance from Devonshire, let the place of my interment be wheresoever my executor (herein after named) shall choose and appoint; unless in writing or by word of mouth I should hereafter signify any particular spot for my place of burial. Thirdly: Let me be buried where I may, my express will and desire is that my grave be dug to the depth of nine feet at the very least, from the surface of the ground; or which would

be still more agreeable to my will and desire, to the depth of twelve feet, if the nature of the soil should admit of it. I earnestly request my executor to see to the performance of this article, with particular care and exactness. Fourthly: My express will is, that my funeral expenses may not, if possible, exceed the sum of twenty pounds sterling. Let no company be invited to my burial. Let no rings, scarves, hat-bands, or mourning of any kind be distributed. Let no funeral sermon be preached. Let no monument be erected.\* Fifthly: Whatsoever worldly substance and effects I shall die possessed of, and be entitled to, before, at or after the time of my decease; whether money, plate, china, books, coins and medals, paintings, linen, clothes, furniture and all other effects of whatsoever kind, and to what amount soever, whether in town or country, at home or abroad; together with all arrears and dues of every sort; I do hereby give and bequeath the whole and every one of them (excepting only such single sum as shall be herein afterwards distinctly named and otherways disposed of) to my valuable and valued friend, Mr. William Hussey, china and glass dealer, of Coventry-street, in the county of Middlesex, and parish of St. James', in the Liberty of Westminster; and who (viz., the said Mr. William Hussey), when not resident in town, is likewise of Kensington Gore, in the said county of Middlesex, in the parish of St. Margarets, Westminster. And I do hereby nominate, constitute, and appoint him, the said William Hussey, the whole

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\* Some part of this was altered by his own verbal direction.

and sole executor of this my last will and testament, and my whole and sole residuary legatee. Sixthly: My will is that my effects so left and bequeathed, as above said, to the aforementioned William Hussey, shall be, and hereby are, charged with the payment of the clear and net sum of one hundred and five pounds, good and lawful money of Great Britain, to Elizabeth Sterling, now or late of Snow Fields, in or near the Borough of Southwark, in the county of Surrey, spinster. Which said sum of one hundred and five pounds lawful money of Great Britain as aforesaid, I will and desire may be made clear and free of all deduction whatever to the said Elizabeth Sterling by my beforenamed executor William Hussey, within three months, at farthest, after my decease; for and in consideration of the long and faithful services rendered by her, the said Elizabeth Sterling, to my late dear and honoured mother of ever loved and revered memory. Seventhly: Let all my manuscripts of what kind soever (I mean all manuscripts of and in my own handwriting) be consumed by fire, within one week after my interment.\* Eighthly: Whereas, it may seem mysterious that I leave and bequeath no testamentary memorial of my regard to any of my own relations, whether by blood or by alliance, and whether related to me by my father's side or by my mother's, it may be proper just to hint my reasons. In the first place, I am greatly mistaken if all my own relations be not superior to me in point of

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\* This was revoked by his own desire, and left to the discretion of his executor.

worldly circumstances. And secondly, as my said relations are rather numerous, I deem myself more than justified in passing them all by, and in not singling out one, or a few, in preference to the rest; especially seeing my good wishes are impartially divided among them all. Ninthly: With respect to many most valued and honoured persons, whose intimacy and friendship have so highly contributed to the happiness of my life, though not related to me by any family tie, these I likewise omit, as legatees: First, because they are in general abundantly richer than myself; and secondly, because they too are so extremely numerous, both in town and country, that it is absolutely out of my power to bequeath to each and every one of them a substantial or very valuable memento of the respectful love which I bear to them in Christ our common Saviour! and to distinguish only some of them by legacies, might carry an implication of ingratitude to the rest. In testimony of all which premises (and at the same time utterly revoking, cancelling, annulling, and rescinding every and all other will or wills by me heretofore made) I hereunto set my hand and seal the day and year first above written, viz., Saturday, the twenty-eighth day of February, and in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy eight; and of the reign of his Majesty King George the Third, the eighteenth year.—AUGUSTUS MONTAGUE TOPLADY. (L. S.)

“Signed, declared, and published as and for the last will and testament of him, the said Augustus Montague Toplady,—in the presence of us who sub-

scribe our names in the testator's presence and at his request.—John Bernard Junther, Thomas Wilks.”

## TOPLADY DESTROYS MANY OF HIS MSS.

After the publication of the first edition of Toplady's collected works in 1794, several persons, it appears, entertained very grave doubts as to the genuineness of his production, which then issued from under the superintendence of Mr. Hussey, in conjunction with Mr. Rowe, the publisher. These doubts are supposed to have arisen from a certain clause in Toplady's will relative to his MSS. (see *ante* p. 88.) This called forth an explanation from Toplady's executor, Mr. Hussey, which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*\* just twenty years after the decease of Toplady:—"Mr. Urban,—Understanding that considerable doubts have arisen respecting the authenticity of the MSS. of the late Rev. Mr. Toplady (which came into my hands as his executor, and which I have since communicated to Mr. Row for publication), I feel myself called upon to step forward and vindicate them from the charge of imposition. Those persons who supposed them to be surreptitious, must have done so from a knowledge of that clause in Mr. T.'s will which directs 'all the MSS. of and in his own hand-writing to be consumed by fire within one week after his interment.' It must, however, be observed, that Mr. T. little thought, at the time

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\* Vol. 68, pt. 1., p. 272. 1798.



of making his will, that he should perform in part this sad office himself, which he actually did, assisted by me. We were two days occupied in the business ; and those few writings which have escaped the flames would doubtless have shared the same fate as the rest if it had not been for the intervention of Dr. Gifford, of the British Museum, and the Rev. Mr. Ryland, sen., of Northampton, who called to see Mr. Toplady during his illness, and found him in the very act of destroying his papers. They expressed their sincere regret at this procedure, and endeavoured to divert him from the further execution of his purpose. To this Mr. Toplady, after repeated expostulations, at length reluctantly consented. Then, turning to me, he said, 'My dear friend, you are at liberty to do whatever you please with the rest ;' which declaration has virtually done away the injunction laid upon me by his will. And here I cannot but lament the loss which the religious and literary world have sustained from the scrupulous delicacy of Mr T.'s mind. The answer he assigned to me for this part of his conduct was, that 'some passages might be twisted from their intended meaning, which, when dead, he should not be able to refute.' I perceived among the MSS. which were committed to the flames, many works of taste and genius, particularly a very voluminous history of England nearly completed. There are among the MSS. which have been rescued, 'An Essay towards a concise Chronological Dictionary,' and 'An History of the Ancient state of Britain, in sixteen letters to the late Mrs. Catherine Macauley,'

which, I doubt not, will confirm his reputation as a writer. I understand Mr. Row designs shortly to publish them. I cannot conclude this letter without improving the opportunity of returning my sincere thanks to Mr. Row for the very liberal manner in which he has acted, and the ample justice he has rendered, at great expence, in bringing forward the works of my dear deceased friend. I am confident the public feel equally indebted to his exertions. I have only to add, that I have given up all the MSS. I have found to that gentleman, who will publish them in a seventh and eighth volume. From my knowledge of the contents, I can assure the public that for usefulness, sentiment, and language, they are not inferior to those printed in Mr. Toplady's lifetime. If any person should still entertain doubts of their authenticity, they may, by reference to Mr. Row, of Great Marlborough-street, see the MSS. in the handwriting of Mr. Toplady himself; or, upon application to me, I will give them every satisfaction in my power. WILLIAM HUSSEY."

In order to bring the reader into a closer acquaintance with the inner life of this excellent man of God, it will be necessary to give a few extracts from his diary, which was found among other MSS., and entitled, "Short Memorials of God's gracious dealings with my soul, in a way of Spiritual experience, from Dec. 6th, 1767," with this motto, "Bethel's visits ought to be remembered."

The writer cannot in any degree fall in with the harsh

and uncharitable assertions made by the reviewer (supposed to be Mr Badcock) of Mr. Toplady's posthumous works, especially what is said of his private meditations, etc.:—"These memorials are much in the style of Mr. Whitefield's, and are in general very unfit to be exposed to the public eye." In another place Toplady's religion, or rather (to use his own words) "devotion," are taxed as being "unmanly and absurd. It is religion trembling with a paralytic affection." This is false in the extreme. Toplady was the subject of that which the reviewer was evidently lacking, namely, the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, by which Toplady was so often drawn out to hold converse with God. This was the mainspring of his happiness, and the felt absence of it was his sore grief.

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### TOPLADY'S DIARY.

This diary contains an intense union of the most exalted sentiments, and displays the feelings of a soul panting with love to the Father of Spirits:—

"Let me, but thyself possess,  
Total sum of happiness!  
Real bliss I then shall prove:  
Heav'n below, and heav'n above."

"*Sunday, Dec. 6, 1767.*—In the morning read prayers and preached here at Fen-Ottery, to a very attentive congregation. In the afternoon the congregation at Harpford was exceedingly numerous; and God enabled me to preach with great enlargement of mind

and fervour. The doctrine did indeed seem to descend as the dew, and to be welcome as refreshing showers to the grass. O my Lord, let not my ministry be approved only, or tend to no more than conciliating the esteem and affections of my people to Thy unworthy messenger; but do the work of Thy grace upon their hearts: call in Thy chosen; seal and edify Thy regenerate; and command Thy everlasting blessing on their souls! Save me from self-opinion and from self-seeking; may they cease from man and look solely to Thee!

*Monday, 7.*—This afternoon I received a letter from my honoured mother, and my chest from London. It is a satisfaction to receive these presents and pledges of an earthly parent's love; but all the relations and all the good things of this life are less than nothing and vanity when compared with the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, and with one glimpse of Thy special favour, O thou gracious Father of Spirits.

*Tuesday, 8.*—Was much refreshed and sensibly comforted in the evening while reading Dr. Gill's sermon on the death of Mr. Fall.

*Wednesday, 9.*—A good deal of company dined here. How unprofitable are worldly interviews! Spent the evening much more advantageously in reading Dr. Gill's sermon on 'The Watchman's Answer,' and that great man's tract on final perseverance. Lord grant me more and clearer evidences of my interest in that everlasting covenant which is ordered in all things and sure!

*“Thursday, 10.*—In my chamber, before I went to bed, was much comforted while singing praise to the great Three-One, the author of all the blessings I enjoy, and of all I hope for. I can testify by sweet and repeated experience, that singing is an ordinance of God, and a means of grace. Lord, fit my soul to bear a part in that song for ever new, which the elect angels and saints made perfect in glory are now singing before the throne and before the Lamb!

*“Friday, 11.*—Rode to Broad Hembury, on a visit to Mr. Luce, where I spent the day, and stopped all night. Before I went to bed, God was with me in private prayer.

*“Saturday, 12.*—After breakfast left Broad-Hembury, and returned home to Fen-Ottery, taking Ottery St. Mary in my way, where I called on my friend Mr. Johnson. In the evening read Bishop Newton on the Prophecies. At night was earnest with God in private prayer for a blessing on my to-morrow’s ministrations, and received an answer of peace. Lord, evermore increase my mental dependence on Thy Holy Spirit. I am less than nothing, if less can be: and O, I am worse than nothing, for I am a vile sinner. But Thou art infinitely gracious, and all power is Thine.

*“Sunday 13.*—The Lord was with me both parts of the day. Water, O God, the souls that heard; and the seed of Thy word, sown in weakness, do Thou raise in power. Between morning and afternoon services read through Dr. Gill’s excellent and nervous tract on predestination, against Wesley. How sweet is

that blessed and glorious doctrine to the soul, when it is received through the channel of inward experience ! I remember a few years ago Mr. Wesley said to me concerning Dr. Gill, that ‘ he is a positive man, and fights for his opinions through thick and thin.’ Let the Doctor fight as he will, I am sure he fights to good purpose, and I believe it may be said of my learned friend, as it was of the Duke of Marlborough, that he never fought a battle that he did not win.

“ *Monday, 14.*—Before I came out of my chamber to-day I was too hasty and short in private prayer. My conscience told me so at the time ; and yet, such was my ingratitude and my folly, that I nevertheless restrained prayer before God. In the course of the day I had great reason to repent of my first sin, by being permitted to fall into another. It is just, O Lord, that Thou shouldst withdraw Thy presence from one who waited so carelessly on Thee. May I never more, on any pretext whatever, rob Thee (or rather deprive my own soul) of Thy due worship ; but make all things else give way to communion with Thee. The Lord however was pleased in a few hours sensibly to heal my backslidings, and open the intercourse of love between Himself and me. I never so feelingly wonder at my own depravity, nor so deeply abhor myself, as when the fire of divine love warms my heart, and the out-pourings of God’s Spirit enliven my soul. Surely the knowledge of salvation is the most powerful incentive to repentance ; and not only the most prevailing, but an absolutely irresistible motive to universal holiness.—Began

Le Clerc's '*Ars Critica*;' a most learned and in many respects useful performance; yet sadly interlarded with scepticism and profaneness. God keep me from being a mere scholar, etc.

"*Friday*, 18.—Rode to Honiton, when I bought Whitty's sermons, the excellent Professor Walæus's works, and two volumes of the Cripplegate Lectures. In the evening, on my return to Fen-Ottery, had some short but sweet rays of comfort from above.

"*Saturday*, 19.—Was afflicted with wanderings in private prayer. Lord, melt down my icy heart, and grant me to wait upon Thee *adidaspos*. O when, to use the language of the seraphic Mr. Hervey, will my devotions be no longer 'like the motes which fluctuate to and fro in the air without any vigorous impulse or certain aim, but like the arrow which springs from the strained bow, and quick as lightning flies to the mark!' My God, I want the *deesis energoumene*—the inwrought prayer (as Mr. Henry justly translates James v. 16),—the prayer of the heart wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost.

"*Sunday*, 20.—Was indisposed the former part of the day. Read prayers and preached in the morning, but languidly. In the afternoon God renewed my strength, and I read prayers and preached at Harpford with much freedom of soul to a large congregation. Oh the difference—the inexpressible difference—between enjoying God's presence and pining in his absence! This day my soul has been like a chariot without wheels; and afterwards mounted as on eagle's wings. Blessed be God

for tempering distress with joy. Too much of the former might weigh me quite down; too much of the latter might exalt me above measure. It is wisely and kindly done, O God, to give me a taste of both.

“*Monday, 21.*—In the morning married John Court and Susannah Carter, at Harpford. On my return spent the after part of the day reading Whitty’s sermons, not without some sensible comfort and joy in the Holy Ghost; yet evangelical as the matter of these discourses is, the style in which they are written will not suffer me to think that the worthy author himself ever intended them for publication. It is a pity but the editor had first let them pass under the file of some able friend. Nevertheless the inaccuracies of composition are greatly overbalanced by the sweet savour of that precious name and adorable grace which to the believing soul are as ointment poured forth.

“*Tuesday, 22.*—All day within. The former part of it I was considerably out of order, and experienced something of what it is to have a body without health and a soul without comfort. But while I was musing the fire kindled, and the light of God’s countenance shone within. I found a particular blessing in reading Mr Mayo’s sermon (Morning Exercises. vol. iv, Sermon. iv) on our “Deliverance by Christ from the fear of Death” (Heb. ii. 15). In the afternoon my indisposition was in a great measure removed. Surely the shedding abroad of Divine love in the heart, and a good hope through grace, frequently conduce as much to health of body as



to health of soul. This is not the first time I have found it so.

*Thursday, 24.*—My faith was weak and my comfort small this whole day, especially in the evening. Yet this is my rock of dependence, that the foundation of the Lord standeth sure. His love is unchangeable; his purposes according to election cannot be overthrown; his covenant is from everlasting to everlasting; and he girded me when I knew it not.

*Friday, 25.*—Read prayers, preached, and administered the holy sacrament here at Fen-Ottery in the morning. Farmer T—e, whom I happened to meet at Miktam, no longer ago than last Wednesday evening, so drunk that he could hardly sit on his horse, presented himself at the Lord's table with the rest of the communicants, but I passed him by, not daring to administer the symbols of my Saviour's body and blood to one who had so lately crucified Him afresh, and had given no proof of repentance. He appeared surprised and abashed. Lord make this denial of the outward visible sign a means of inward and spiritual grace to the soul!—In the afternoon read prayers and preached to a very large congregation at Harpford. Drank tea at Farmer Carter's. Spent part of the evening at Mr. Leigh's, at Hayne. From thence returned home to Fen-Ottery. A day of most intense cold. At night in my chamber God was with me in my private waiting upon him; and I could indeed say from my heartfelt sense of His love, that it is good for me to draw nigh unto the Lord.

Thy visitation, sweet Jesus, is the life and joy of my spirit.

“*Saturday, 26.*—Gave Dr. Gill’s tract on Justification another reading, not without much edification and comfort. I do think that this great man’s arguments for the proper eternity of this blessing *ex parte Dei*, are unanswerable. Glory be to Thee, O Lord, for my sense of special interest in Thy everlasting love! Were all the treasures of ten thousand worlds displayed to my view, the sight of them, the mere sight, would not make me the richer nor the happier: it is the knowledge of peculiar property in any blessing that felicitates the soul. In this the comfort lies; and, thanks to divine grace, I can look upon all the unsearchable riches of Christ as my own. Lord increase my faith, and add to my thankfulness more and more.

“*Sunday, 27.*—In the morning read prayers and preached at Harpford to a congregation tolerably large, and very attentive. In the afternoon read prayers and preached, with great liberty and enlargement of mind, here at Fen-Ottery. My subject was Acts xiii. 39. The sermon itself (excepting a few additions here and there) was what I had formerly wrote in Ireland in the year 1760, a little before I quitted College.

“*Tuesday, 29.*—At night before I betook myself to rest, I was enabled to act faith very strongly on the promises. I was as if I had held a conversation with God. He assured me of His faithfulness, and I trusted Him. It was whispered to my soul ‘Thou shalt find Me faithful:’ my soul answered, ‘Lord I believe it: I

take Thee at Thy word." This I am certain was more than fancy. It was too sweet, too clear, and too powerful to be the daughter of imagination. There was a *nescio quid divini*, attended with joy unspeakable as much superior to all the sensations excited by earthly comforts 'as the heavens are higher than the earth,' etc.

"*Wednesday, 30.*—Held my tithe dinner at Harpford. The greater part of both parishes attended; they seemed greatly satisfied; and I had as much reason to be satisfied with them. Busy as I was myself in receiving my dues, and numerous as the company was, Mr Powell, of Ottery (who made one) and myself, had several opportunities of conversing on the best subjects, particularly the decrees of God and the spiritual impotence of man's will, etc.

"*Thursday, 31.*—All day within, reading. The thought of how many acquaintances I have lost by death within the course of the year, dwelt with great weight upon my mind. . . . And yet I am spared! Lord, may it be for good and not for evil! There are that I know of, but two things worth living for; I. To further the cause of God, and thereby glorify Him before the world: II. To do good to the souls and bodies of men. Upon a review of the past year, I desire to confess, that my unfruitfulness has been exceeding great; my sins still greater: and God's mercies greater than both. It is now between eleven and twelve at night: nor can I conclude the year more suitably to the present frame of my own mind, than with the following verse from one of my hymns; which

expresses both my sense of past and my humble dependence on divine goodness for future favours :—

‘Kind Author and ground of my hope,  
Thee, Thee for my God I avow;  
My glad Ebenezer set up,  
And own Thou hast help’d me till now :  
I muse on the years that are past,  
Wherein my defence Thou has proved  
Nor wilt Thou abandon at last  
A sinner so signally loved.’

“*Saturday, January 2, 1768.*—In the afternoon called on William Perry, of Southertown. Our discourse happened to take a serious turn. Among other subjects, we spoke concerning the divinity of the ever blessed Son of God. I could scarce help smiling, at the same time that I heartily applauded the honest zeal of my well-meaning parishioner: ‘Let any man’ said he ‘but search the Scriptures, and if he does not find that Christ, as a divine person, subsisted, not only previous to his birth of the Virgin Mary, but from everlasting, I will lose my head,’ etc.

“*Sunday, 3.*—Read prayers and preached in the morning here at Fen-Ottery; and in the afternoon at Harpford, to a very large congregation, considering the quantity of snow that lies on the ground, and the intenseness of the frost, which rendered it almost equally unsafe to walk or ride. I opened my ministrations of this year, with that grateful acknowledgment of the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 10, “By the grace of God I am what I am,” which was my thesis, both parts of the day, etc.

*“Saturday, 9.—*This evening I felt unusual diffidence in myself, about the performance of my to-morrow’s duty. Free (blessed be God) from fighting without I had fears within. I besought the Lord to manifest His strength in my weakness, and these precious words were returned with unutterable power and sweetness to my soul, ‘Trust in the Lord Jehovah, for in Him is everlasting strength.’ I was instantly enabled to cast myself with perfect acquiescence on the message from heaven; which, though delivered as an exhortation, is in effect a most glorious and comfortable promise, etc.

*“Sunday, 10.—*Found God faithful to His word. Great was my strength both morning and afternoon; nor less the liveliness of my soul in preaching. Received a letter from my honoured mother. The same person who brought it, brought me likewise two London newspapers; which I hope to read to-morrow; but dare not do so on God’s day, etc.

*“Tuesday, 12.—*In the afternoon read Dr. Calamy’s account of the Ejected Ministers. What a blow to vital religion, to the protestant interest in general, and to the Church of England herself, was the fatal extinguishment of so many burning and shining lights! But they are now where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest, etc.

*“Thursday, 17.—*Was greatly edified and comforted in reading Mr. Lee’s choice sermon on ‘Secret Prayer,’ etc.

*“Sunday, 17.—*God gave me strength to go through the public duties of the day in a comfortable and be-

coming manner. Between morning and afternoon service, read the first epistle to the Thessalonians in the Greek. In the evening read the Cripplegate Lectures. Though my joy in the Lord had not been great to day, yet this has been a profitable Sabbath to my own soul: O God, make it so to the attentive people who sat under my unworthy ministry!

“*Friday, 22.*—In the morning rode to Exeter by appointment, to meet Mr. Luce. Put up at the Swan. Bought ‘Cave’s *Historia Literaria*,’ ‘Brooks’ Dispensatory,’ and ‘Erskine’s Sermons,’ in three vols. At night, I spent three or four hours reading ‘Erskine’s sermons,’ particularly the following ones: ‘The rent vail of the Temple;’ ‘The harmony of Divine attributes;’ ‘The believer exalted in imputed righteousness;’ and ‘Faith’s plea upon God’s Word and Covenant.’ The reading of these sweet discourses was wonderfully blest to my soul. Great was my rejoicing and triumph in Christ. The Lord was with me of a truth and his gracious visitation revived my spirit. One moment’s communion with Christ, one moment’s sense of union with him, one moment’s view of interest in him, is ineffable, inestimable!

“*Saturday, 23.*—Before I retired to my chamber I read Erskine’s sermon (and a matchless one it is), entitled, ‘The promising God a performing God,’ and the Lord set the seal of His Spirit on my heart. I was enabled to mix faith with what I read; and God made it a time of love, joy, peace, and spiritual refreshment to my soul. I could look and pray to him as my

covenant God in Jesus Christ who loved me from everlasting and will love me without end.

*"Sunday, 24.*—A day of almost perpetual rain. Read prayers and preached in the morning at Harpford, and here in the afternoon, to large congregations considering the weather. God was with me in a way of bodily strength; but I cannot say I had much spiritual communion with him in a way of sensible intercourse. But though my fleece was not watered, I trust the dew of heaven fell around, &c.

*"Sunday, 31.* . . . I think I have seldom, if ever, seen such an appearance of usefulness among my Harpford people since I knew them as this afternoon. Dr. P. of Ottery seemed to be touched from above. (Text Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27.) How sweet is the work of the ministry when attended with the unction and power of the Holy One. My soul has been very barren ever since last Lord's day; but this Sabbath has been a Sabbath indeed.

*"Monday, February 1.*—Before I went to bed this night, the Lord favoured me with some sweet intimations of his love.

*"Sunday, 7.*—In the morning, at Harpford, and here at Fen-Ottery in the afternoon. I read prayers and preached to a very full congregation each time, and, I trust, the word was blest to some. . . In the evening read Bunyan's Pilgrim. What a stiff, sapless, tedious piece of work is that written by Bishop Patrick! How does the unlearned tinker of Bedford outshine the Bishop of Ely! I have heard that his lordship wrote

his 'Pilgrim' by way of antidote against what he deemed the fanaticism of John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim,' etc.\*

*Wednesday, 10.*—The Lord was very gracious to my soul this afternoon. His Spirit was the Comforter, and Mr. Erskine's two sermons on "The Rainbow of the Covenant" were the channels through which the comfort was conveyed, etc.

*Thursday, 11.*—Began to compose "A Course of Family Prayer." The Lord prosper the work of my hands upon me, and make it useful, etc.

*Friday, 12.*—A little before bed-time I darted up an ejaculation that God would be pleased to strengthen me, and give me faithfulness in the discharge of my duty to the parishioners of Broad-Hembury, whither I expect soon to remove. May God give me this sweet answer immediately, "I will enable thee, and bless thee." Behold the servant of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.

*Sunday, 14.*—In the morning read prayers and preached here at Fen-Ottery, to a pretty full auditory. In the afternoon read prayers and preached at Harpford, and preached Mrs. Mary Wheaton's funeral sermon to an exceeding great congregation indeed. I could not forbear observing 'that God had spared her to a good old age; that she was born in the year 1675, ten years before the death of Charles the Second, and about four-

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\* The writer here begs to state that the so-called *third part* of Bunyan's *Pilgrim Progress*, first printed in 1692, and of which a sixth edition appeared in 1705, is a spurious and contemptible production.—[See Lownd's *Bibliographical Manual*; Bohn's Ed.]



teen before the coming of King William the Third; that she lived in the reigns of seven monarchs, and died last Tuesday, aged ninety-three.'

" *Wednesday, 17.*—In my chamber this evening the words (2 Tim., i, 7) 'God hath not given unto us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,' were impressed much upon my heart, and my meditation on them was attended not only with great peace and sweetness, but with joy in the Holy Ghost. My sense of union and communion with God was very clear; and I was enabled to see myself one of God's regenerate people by finding within myself (through the riches of grace alone) those three infallible evidences of conversion which that delightful text lays down. The Spirit of Christ was to me a Spirit of power, when he effectually called me to the knowledge of himself in the year 1756 at Codrington, in Ireland, under the ministry of Mr. James Morris.

" *Sunday, 21.*—In the evening I was enabled to draw much spiritual improvement from that passage (John xi 40) 'Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the glory of God?' Lord, cause me to do the one, and to see the other.

" *Tuesday, 23.*—Awoke very early this morning, with these words full and deep upon my mind, 'I will give unto you the sure mercies of David.' I cannot say that I had an immediate sense of covenant interest in that glorious promise; yet the impression of it was attended with a satisfactory sweetness, and its signifi-

tion was, as it were, spontaneously opened to me in a manner too clear and pleasing to be expressed, etc.

“*Sunday, 28.*—The Lord was with me in the discharge of my ministry both parts of the day, especially in the afternoon at Harpford. Oh my faithful God, bless the word spoken !

“*Wednesday, March 2.*—In secret prayer this morning, before I left my chamber, the fire of Divine love kindled, and the Lord sensibly shone upon my soul. I could not forbear saying, O why art thou so kind to the chief of sinners ?’ I was so taken up, and, as it were, circumfused with the love of God, and the perception of my union with him, that I could hardly ask for pardon. Thus I walked in the light of his countenance for I suppose two or three minutes, when, alas ! evil wanderings intervened, my warmth of joy suddenly subsided, and I was in great measure brought down from the mount. Yet the sweetness and peace of this heavenly visit remained after the blessed Visitant had withdrawn. Though the sun himself retired from view, yet (if I may so express it) I enjoyed the refraction of his beams. He did not disappear without leaving a blessing behind him ; sufficient, I trust, for faith to live upon until I see him again. In the afternoon, wrote several letters ; among the rest, one to my honoured friend Dr. Gill.

“*Thursday, 3.*—Upon a review of this day, in which my mind has been variously exercised, I have great reasons to stand astonished at my own baseness ; nor less so, at the several instances of mercy, both temporal

and spiritual, with which God has favoured me since I awaked this morning, etc.

“*Sunday, 6.*—In the morning read prayers and preached at Harpford, and in the afternoon here at Fen-Ottery: would I could say with the fervour and sensible joy I sometimes experience; but I was rather in a cold frame the whole day. Lord pardon my unworthiness, and wash away the iniquity of my holy things in the blood of Him thou hast provided for a burnt offering, etc.

“*Tuesday, 8.*—Our family dining early to-day Mr. Harris (of Wellington) and myself took a walk about two in the afternoon to the top of Fen-Ottery Hill. Looking round from thence, I observed to him how plainly we could see the two churches of Harpford and Fen-Ottery in the vale beneath us. Perceiving, however, a pillar of smoke rising into the air at a little distance from Harpford tower, I asked my companion what he thought it was? He replied, ‘I suppose they are burning stroil.’ Imagining [this to be the case, we continued our walk for, I believe, full three hours, round Ailsbear-hill and other parts of the common. Coming at last to Micktam in our circuit, we called on old Farmer Franke, and were hardly seated before he asked us whether we had heard of the fire at Harpford; adding that, according to the best of what his eldest son could discern, it was Farmer Endicott’s house that was burning. The wind being pretty strong (north-east by east) I knew that if it was Endicott’s house, or any of his adjoining ones, the vicarage house and

offices must be in imminent danger. I posted away to Harpford without delay; and being got within near view of the village, plainly perceived by the course of the smoke that the vicarage had actually taken fire. By the time I arrived at the wooden bridge, I met a man coming to acquaint me with what had happened. Upon seeing me he saluted me with, 'Sir, your house is burnt down to the ground.' Entering the village I found it almost literally true. The dwelling-house, the barn, the lincays, the stable, etc., with the back house rented by John Woodford, were, as it were by sympathy, all in flames at once, and more than half consumed. Thomas Wilson's house, and that in which Henry Bishop lately lived (from which latter mine caught fire), were totally destroyed. When I saw the vicarage irrecoverably lost, I returned to Fen-Ottery, and took horse for Exeter, where I arrived between eight and nine in the evening, and put up at Mr Lathbury's. Being fatigued with my hasty ride, I thought to best appraise Mr. Gearing (agent for the London Insurance Office), by a note, of what had happened; who, in his answer, desired to see me the next morning. What I chiefly enter down this account in my diary for is this, namely, as a memento of God's great goodness to me both in a way of providence and grace. Though I was not certain whether the expense (I mean all the above insurance) of building the vicarage-house, with its appendages, might not eventually fall on me (notwithstanding my resignation of the living last January 23), by Mr Luce's probably refusing, in consequence of this

misfortune, to complete our projected exchange; yet neither the report nor the sight of this alarming visitation made me so much as change countenance, or feel the least dejection. . . Spent the evening not only in a comfortable, but even in a rejoicing frame of mind, and never rested better afterwards. Thou, Lord, canst make the feeble as David, etc.

"*Wednesday, 9.*—Continued at Exeter until after dinner. Called on Mr. Gearing and Mr. Geare. Found, after inquiry, that the fire at Harpford happening after the living was vacated by my resignation of it, the exchange will certainly stand good, and the melancholy event there cannot possibly affect me. Who would not trust in the Lord and wait until a cloudy dispensation is cleared up?

"*Thursday, 10.*—Drinking tea this afternoon at Farmer Carter's I had an opportunity of seeing more leisurely the devastation at Harpford. The whole vicarage is one large mass of ruins. What a providential mercy was it that I resigned the living before this misfortune happened! O, God, how wise and how gracious art thou in all thy ways.

"*Friday, 11.*—After breakfast rode to Broad Hem-bury, where I dined with Mr. Luce, who bears the late afflictive providence at Harpford better than I could have expected.

"*Sunday, 13.*—In the morning read prayers and preached here at Fen-Ottery, and in the afternoon at Harpford (from Rom. viii., 28), to an exceeding large congregation. I have much reason to bless God for

the great measure of bodily strength vouchsafed to me to-day, yet my soul was by no means in a lively frame. . . . At night, before I went to bed, was much troubled with coldness and wanderings in secret prayer.

“*Monday, 14.*—Looking over one of my journals this morning I could not help blessing God for such a series of mercies as my life has been made up of; upon which these words were instantaneously and sweetly suggested to my soul, ‘I will carry thee on.’ Amen, gracious Lord!

“*Sunday, 20.*—In the morning read prayers and preached at Harpford to a very full congregation; but without any ray of sweetness or enlargement; at least to myself. Between morning and afternoon service I was much dejected and bowed down in spirit. I was so far left to the doubtings and evil surmisings of my own unbelieving heart as even to dread the remaining public duties that lay before me. But the glorious Lord was better to me than my fears, and graciously disappointed my ungracious misgivings, for in the afternoon he was with me both in a way of strength and in a way of consolation. I read prayers and preached here at Fen-Ottery with great freedom and considerable liveliness to a crowded church. About six in the evening, being alone in my chamber, I was still more sensibly led forth beside the waters of comfort. I tasted some sweet droppings of the honey-comb, and could say, ‘My Lord and my God.’ The embers were blown aside by the breath of the Holy Spirit; the veil of unbelief was rent; and the shadows fled away.

Light sprung up and the fire kindled : even the light of God's countenance, and the fire of his love, etc.

" *Monday, 21.*—Between ten and eleven at night, in my chamber, a little before I betook myself to rest, the Lord favoured me with some gracious outgoings of affection toward himself. My meditation of Him, and communion with Him, were sweet, and the intimation of His love to me drew forth my love to Him, etc.

" *Thursday, 24.*—In the afternoon the Lord gave me this word of comfort, 'I have put away thy sin.' It came with power, and I was enabled to believe the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Towards evening I was in a very comfortable frame of soul, while making some considerable additions to my sermon on John ii. 19. How greatly do these occasional visits from above cheer and strengthen a sinner on his way to Zion, etc.

" *Friday, 25.*—This afternoon and evening, but especially at night, the Lord has been very gracious to my soul. I could see myself loved with an everlasting love and clothed with Christ's everlasting righteousness. My peace flowed as a river; and I found the comforts of the Holy Spirit to be neither few nor small. . . . My harp is taken down from the willows, and I can sing the Lord's song in a strange land :—

Touched by the finger of thy love,  
Sweet melody of praise I bring ;  
Join the enraptured choirs above,  
And feel the bliss which makes them sing.'

" *Saturday, 26.*—A letter from London informs me that poor old Lady Goring is lately turned Papist.

Surely it is a debt I owe to God, to truth, to my own conscience, and to the friendship with which that unhappy lady formerly honoured me, to write to her on this sad occasion. Lord keep me steadfast in the purity of Thy blessed gospel, and if it please Thee, recover her from this snare of the Devil, etc.

“*Sunday, 27.*—Palm Sunday. Between eight and nine this morning the Lord visited my soul with a lively sense of His salvation. My comfort, joy, and triumph were unutterable for some minutes; and the savour of His precious ointment, thus divinely shed abroad in my heart, abode with me more or less through the course of the whole day, etc.

“*Tuesday, 29.*—That sweet text, ‘This God is our God for ever and ever; He shall be our guide even unto death;’ proved a cordial to my soul this morning. Blessed be His name I could adopt those words of triumph and still can, in the assurance of faith. I am, through grace, as clearly satisfied of my interest in the blessing they contain as if they were addressed to me by name. I remember a delightful paraphrase of these golden passages, written by Mr. Hart, which I cannot help putting down here; and the rather, as they are the very language of my soul at present:—

‘This God is the God we adore,  
Our faithful unchangeable friend;  
Whose love is as great as His power,  
And knows neither measure nor end.  
’Tis Jesus the first and the last,  
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;  
We’ll praise Him for all that is past,  
And trust Him for all that’s to come.’



. . . . Thou has knit me to Thyself in the bonds of an everlasting covenant which shall not be forgotten and cannot be annulled. Thou hast set me as a seal upon Thine arm, and hast set the seal of Thy Spirit upon my heart. I can sing with one of Thy saints, now in heaven :—

‘Love moved Thee to die,  
And on this I rely,  
My Saviour hath loved me I cannot tell why :  
But this I can find,  
We two are so joined  
He’ll not be in glory and leave me behind.’

“*April 1.*—Good Friday. In the morning read prayers, preached, and administered the blessed sacrament at Harpford. Both in the pulpit and at the Lord’s table my joy, consolation and enlargement of soul were great; and I think I never saw communicants more humble, serious, and devout. God’s presence seemed to be manifested among us in a very uncommon manner, etc.

“*Saturday, 2.*—After breakfast rode to Exeter, where I dined at Mr. Holmes’s. . . . Mrs. Paul, of Topsham, and Mr. Lewis, a worthy Baptist minister, dined with us. Our conversation at table was on the best subjects: and I found our Christian discussions sensibly blessed to my soul. After tea, myself and four more followed the remains of Master Holmes to Eade, about two miles out of the city, where they were interred. Mr. Cole, curate of the parish, read the

funeral service; and I preached a sermon suitable to the solemn occasion, to a large auditory and one of the most attentive ones I ever saw, etc.

These few extracts, gathered as they are from the chronicle of events of part of Toplady's life, will at once unfold to the spiritual minded reader the true spirit of grace which actuated this godly man in his private devotions, as well as in the performance of every act connected with his public ministerial functions.

Toplady's portrait was taken at Farnham, by Messrs. Smith and Trotter. [See Manning and Bray, History of Surrey.]

The following list of his published works, which must terminate these memoirs, will, it is hoped, be found useful to the bibliographer in days yet to come.



## APPENDIX.

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The first edition of Toplady's collected works was published in six vols. 8vo. 1794, by Mr W. Row, of Great Marlborough-street. A new edition appeared in 1825, and again in 1828 ; also in one volume 8vo. in 1853. This one-volume edition is considered the best of the two later editions, in which part two of the sermon, "Jesus seen of Angels," has been restored. The edition of 1794 has now become rather scarce.

### VOL. I.

Contains Memoirs of the Author. Historic proof of the doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England.

### VOL. II.

Historic Proof (continued). A word on the Bathing-Tub Baptism. Chronology of England from Egbert to Henry VIII. On the abolition of Ecclesiastical Subscriptions, 1771.

### VOL. III.

SERMONS.—A Caveat against Unsound Doctrine. (London, 1770). I TIMOTHY, I 10. Jesus seen of Angels.—Second sermon. I TIMOTHY, III 16. God's mindfulness of Man. PSALM, VIII 4. Clerical subscription no grievance. MATTHEW, IV 23. Free-will and merit fairly examined, PSALM, CXV 1. Good News from Heaven. PSALM, LXXXIX 15 16. Joy in Heaven over one repenting sinner. LUKE, XV 7 The existence and creed of Devils considered, with a word concerning apparitions. JAMES, II 19. Moral

and Political moderation recommended. (Fast Day.)  
 PHILIPP., IV 5.

ESSAYS.—Reflections on the Conversion of Saint Matthew. LUKE v, 27, 28. Life a Journey. GENESIS xii, 5. On original sin. ROMANS v, 19. The various fears to which God's people are liable. 2 COR. vii, 5. Christmas Meditations on GEN. xlix, 10. Meditations for New Year's day. A description of Antinomianism. ROMANS vii, 22. Thoughts on REV. vii, 14 15, HEB. vi, 4—6. ECCLES., vii, 16, 1 COR. xv, 28, ROM. viii, 4 and ix, 3, 1 COR. xv, 5, CANT. viii, 14. Meditations on the Collect for the First Sunday in Advent. Concise History of the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and the *Te Deum*. Query concerning a passage in the Marriage ceremony, stated and resolved. A Cursory Review of Valour, Patriotism, and Friendship. On Sacred Poetry. Reflections for the year 1776. On the Assurance of Faith. Speeches delivered at the Queen's Arms, Newgate-street, on the following questions:—Whether the world is to be destroyed by fire, etc. Whether unnecessary cruelty to the brute creation is not criminal. Whether our good works will add to our future degree of glory. National Debt. Manner of stoning among the Jews. Manner of whipping among the Jews. Remarkable description of St. Paul's person.

#### VOL. IV.

Biography of John Knox. Fox the Martyrologist. Dr. Jewel. Dr. Carleton. Lord Harrington. Herman Witsius. Rev. V. Alsop, M.A. Dr. T. Wilson. Dr. I. Watts. Elizabeth Rowe. Rev. G. Whitefield. Anecdotes. Incidents and Historic Passages. Natural History. Solar System. Observations and Reflections. Excellent Passages from Eminent Persons. Christianity Reversed, being a summary of Lord Chesterfield's Creed. A Sketch of Modern Female Education. Important Remarks.

VOL. V.

The Church of England Vindicated from the Charge of Arminianism; and the Case of Arminian Subscription particularly considered in a Letter to Rev. Dr. Nowell. [Lond., Feb. 13, 1769] pp. 157, 8vo. The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination stated and asserted, with a preliminary Discourse on the Divine Attributes, translated in great measure from the Latin of Jerome Zanchius: with an account of his Life. Appendix concerning the Fate of the Ancients. A Letter to John Wesley relative to his pretended abridgment of Zanchius on Predestination. More Work for Mr. John Wesley, entitled the Consequence Proved. An Old Fox tarred and feathered, occasioned by what is called Mr. John Wesley's calm address to our American Colonies.

'In politics I dabble, too,  
'Brave Jack of all trades I!'

*Cæciliane Fur. es.*

Advertisement—'The following sheet does not enter seriously and argumentally into the merits of either side of the dispute now depending between England and America. This has already been done by others, and probably will be by more. The intention of these pages is (1) To show Mr Wesley's honesty as a Plagiarist; and (2). To raise a little skin, by giving the Fox a gentle flogging as a turn-coat.' Particulars of Pope Joan. Contemplation on Snow—Job xxxviii., 22. Reflections on a Thunder Storm. Thoughts on Perseverance. A course of Family Prayer for each day in the week. Sketch of a Sermon on John vii. 38, 39.

VOL. VI.

The scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity asserted, in opposition to Mr John Wesley's Tract on that subject. [In vii. chapters.] A Dissertation concerning the Sensible Qualities of Matter. Collection of Letters. An answer to the following questions:—Whether popular applause can yield solid satisfaction to a truly great mind?

Whether a highwayman or a cheating tradesman is not the honester person? Poems on sacred subjects (written between fifteen and eighteen years of age.) Hymns, modernised from the office for ordinations.

Toplady's course of prayer has passed through several editions. The edition of 1818 contains an addition of several poetical pieces, &c., from the author's manuscripts.

Devotional Retirement, with Meditations and Remarks, was also found among Toplady's MSS., to which is added an essay on Job. [Lond. 1820, 12mo.] Contemplation on the Sufferings, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. [Lond. 1822, 12mo.] Many excellent articles written by Toplady appeared in the Gospel Magazine, of which he was for some time the worthy editor. Equality of Happiness in Heaven asserted, was found among the author's MSS. A sermon entitled, The Spirit of Adoption, was published at Edinburgh, in 1860. Watt states that Toplady's posthumous works were published by his executor. *Lond.* 1783. 8vo.(?) Hymns and poems, a reprint of the original edition, with a sketch of his life. *Lond.* Sedgwick, 1860.

Thus much for the life-story of one whose name will undoubtedly be held in sweet remembrance by the living family of God through all time; and whose works will live while those of his enemies fade into a peaceful nonentity.

“ . . . . May his fair fame  
For ever travel, whilst his ashes rest.”







